

Thus Spake Gurudevā...

SANGAT SAMTAVAD

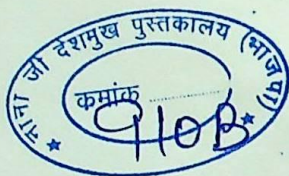
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Thus Spake Gurudeva...

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Preface

Thus Spake Gurudeva puts before the reader some of the questions that knock for answer at every heart, questions that neither restless ambition nor mad desire can conceal or lay aside. For these questions relate to man's morality and the pain and the anguish that go with it. Today's world has chosen to sleep over this pain and this anguish. It has opted for the path of conceptual and technical mastery over Nature to soften down our moral tragedy. But the strategy has not worked. It has not because it could not. The gloom that broods over the works of the more serious writers of today's world bespeaks of this failure in oppressively clear terms.

Man has to live his morality to make it redemptive. He has not to shun it or avoid it. The path to meaningfulness lies in self-submission to our fate, not in fighting against it. Man must live as an authentic inmate of the earth, must let the vast expanse of the sky sink into him, must let all mystery, all insecurity come into him, flow into him. Only then will his life find its meaning and its truth. This is the 'message' that this work will give to its reader, a 'message' resonant with sincerity, because it comes from a man who lived what he said, saw what he proclaimed.

Fervent was his ardour and long his watch. Under the leafy solitude of forests he meditated and under the mystic silence of the stars and the ecstasy of dark clouds with their rains and their lightnings. The prowling beast of prey participated in his ecstasy as did the rocks he sat in and the trees he sat under. Truly his *tapas* was not the *tapas* of a man but of all that we call human, we call cosmic and we call divine.

The men who asked the questions were men of the world—naive as well sophisticated. Some of them were seekers of redemptive truth. The answers accorded with the dispositions and attitudes of the questioners. They had, however, one purpose: to lead the questioner to self-submission to what is, to the cultivation of the disposition of openness and letting be. Most of these questions and answers have been reproduced from memory. For this reason, occasional lapses in content and style may have crept in. Substantially, however, they may be accepted as authentic.

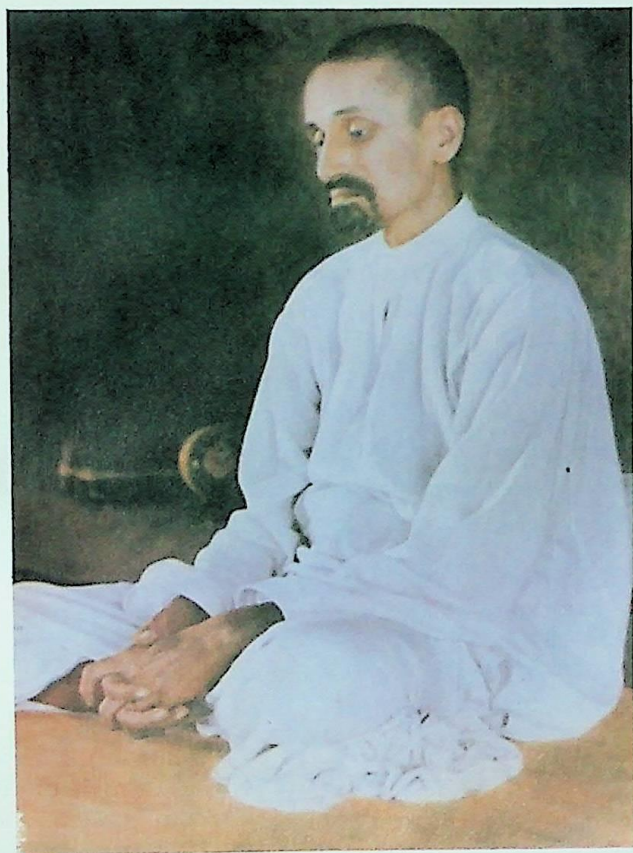
It is hoped the readers will find in these words what they seek. They will provide solace to the unhappy and caution to the self-complacent.

Sanṅat Samatāvāda

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सत्पुरुष श्री मंगतराम जी महाराज

A BRIEF LIFE-SKETCH OF GURUDEV MANGATRAM

Rightly has it been said that blessed are the parents who bear the fruit of the Divine Wisdom. Blessed, indeed, is the Fruit of the Womb which, like an auspicious lamp, encampasses, with its illuminating rays, the entire creation. Pure and holy is the Womb which reflects the transparency of the Word.

Difficult it is to fathom the play of the Lord concerning Grace in terms of which the finitude of the finite is negated. How and in what manner the Lord expresses His Grace is as mysterious as are the depths of ocean or the ambiguities of Life.

A deeply religious family, devoted to the service and worship of the Lord, lived in Gangothian, which, before the partition of the country, was a part of the undivided Punjab. It was a family in which the inward life of the Spirit was cultivated with holy zeal and devotion. It was in such a holy family in which Gurudeva Mangatram was born on November 24, 1903. The grandfather of Gurudeva, Pandit Sunderdas, was not only an upright and righteous person, but was a man who, through meditative asceticism, had realized the highest state of the Spirit. He had reached the highest state of pure Subjectivity and absolute freedom.

The seed of such a person will be but the embodiment of virtue. Sunderdas's son, Pandit Gauri Shanker, not only kept the holy traditions of the family alive, but remained immersed in the delight and

flavour of the Spirit. Gauri Shanker, although a householder, lived a total life of renunciatory detachment and dispassion. Through the practice of dissociation, he was able to experience the state of co-extensive unity whereby the contentment of *sameness* reflected itself through his deeds.

It is to this holy person to whom a son, in the shape of Mangatram, was born. Far-fetched it would not be to say that the seed of Gauri Shanker and his wife would always be blessed by the generations to come. Unwritten law of Nature it is that the saints, from their very infancy, show some definite spiritual signs of saintliness. Gurudeva Mangatram, being the incarnate-Word, did show some exceptional signs of spirituality. Gurudeva, as a child, could not, thus, escape the discerning eye of those who could observe the un-child-like behaviour of his. Gurudeva, as a child, showed the signs of spiritual introversion, in that he would keep himself aloof from other children of his age. There was no restlessness of a child in him. We are told that his face reflected such calmness of the mind which comes about through a long practice of meditation. The child Mangat is said to have been of serious deport, as he would hardly play the pranks or games of a child. So serious was he that he would keep himself away from the din and noise of the surroundings.

When Gurudeva was barely four years old, he lost his father. Being the only child of the family, he became, after the passing away of his father, the centre of affection and of love for his mother. He became, thus, the centre as well as the source for those unrealised hopes which every mother sees in her child.

We are informed that Gurudeva began the practice of meditation when he was barely four years old. It is said that he would keep night vigils, as he would most of the time, during the night, be in meditation. He would sit in a yogic posture, and would remain immersed in the meditative state. The mother, whenever she would get up from the bed in the night, found her young sibling absorbed in meditation. Henceforward it became a habit with Gurudeva, throughout his life, to meditate at the commencement of night. About his spiritual experiences as a child, Gurudeva once spoke these words to one of his devotee:

Qs. Who, sir, is your Guru?

Ans. *This* (referring to himself), dearly beloved, never had a Guru. It is God Himself who is the Guru of *This*. The need of a Guru is felt by the one who experiences inward spiritual lacks or deficiencies, or in whom the spiritual spark is totally absent. Merciful has Lord always been to *This*. So *This*, from the very infancy, has never felt the need of a Guru. At the age three *This* had the experience of spiritual awakening. Although even as a child *This* could discriminate the real from the unreal, yet *This* never overstepped the boundaries of legitimate prohibitions. So the light of the inward spiritual state had to be kept concealed from others *This* knows neither the Guru nor the disciple, as all of us are of the same essential nature.....

The child Mangat began his education in a village school of Dera-Khalsa. Even as a child, he was experiencing the burning flames of dispassion and renunciation within. Whether at home or school, he would spend much of his time in meditation. So engrossed would he remain in the practice of meditation the he knew nothing about the events which were taking place around him. As a consequence of meditative absorption, the child Mangat cared little for food or for clothes. Most of the time he would share his food at school with children who were either poor or had no food to eat. It became a custom or habit with the child Mangat to retire, after the school, for meditation to a place which was secluded and away from the populace. As a young lad, he began to visit a lonely forest, namely, Pirkhwaja, regularly.

Alarmed at the strange behaviour of her only child, Gurudeva's mother wanted to divert his mind from the spiritual pursuit. All her persuasions failed, and ultimately she had allow her child to pursue his path unimpeded. The child Mangat, however, did not allow his spiritual pursuit to interfere in his education. After passing his fourth standard, he had to go for further schooling to Kallar, which was at a distance of six miles from Gangothian. As the distance was long, so Mangat stayed with his sister at Kallar. While in Kallar, he continued the practice of meditation. He

would never spend the night at his sister's house; instead he would go to a lonely place where he would spend entire night in meditation. One day an accident took place, and Gurudeva later explained it in these words:

"Dark was the night, and *This* had left the sister's home for a lonely spot where meditation could be practised uninterruptedly throughout the night. Suddenly *This* had a slip, and as a consequence *This*, at the time of slip, was aware only of the gorge that was below the spot where the slip had occurred. Due to the slip, *This* rolled down, and, while rolling down, *This* felt as if being held by someone with hands as soft as wool. It was, indeed, a miracle of miracles. *This* was able to regain the normal state of consciousness only next morning."

Thus the child Mangat continued his education as well as spiritual praxis. An invisible change began to manifest itself in child Mangat when he was in the 8th standard. He began to loose interest in the affairs of the world. Things of the world held no attraction for him. Thus the flames of dispassion and detachment began to illumine his entire being. Day and night would he plead with the Lord: "Oh Lord, have mercy!" While in this mood, Gurudeva experienced a sudden spiritual illumination one night. This is how he has described this experience:

"When *This* opened eyes from meditation, what *This* found was the illuminating rays of the light glowing in the entire room. *This* immediately closed the eyes, as *This* wanted the delight of spiritual flavour to continue. No more, thus, remained the secret path of Yoga hidden or concealed. Became everything, as a consequence of this experience, worthless in comparison to the bliss of meditative ecstasy."

Gurudeva was merely thirteen years of age when this enstatic or transiatic experience occurred. Another similar experience was soon to follow:

"Revealed was the first three-lettered *mantra* when *This* was, one night, sitting by the bank of a pond. The following were the

letters that were revealed during the night: *Om! Brahma satyam!* Next day was revealed the nature of the *mantra*: *nirankar ajanma advait pursha*. The rest of the *mantra* was revealed on the third day: *sarab vyapak kalyan murat parameahvarya namastam*. Each day *This* wrote down the part of the *mantra* that was being revealed. Henceforth whenever *This* would sit for meditation, whether in the forest or in some solitary place, the divine *mantra* would reveal itself. This never spoke to anyone concerning the revelation of the *mantra*."

As a consequence of this divine revelation, it became difficult for Gurudeva to continue his education. As his mind was more inclined towards spirituality than education, he began to neglect his education at school. So one day he bade good by to his school, and went back to Gangothian. While back to his own home, he neglected his worldly duties. Instead he would spent more and more time in meditation. He never took any interest in the problems of the house. In this manner passed five more years of life. Taking no interest in the problems of the home, he lived like a stranger. Also he did not earn his living. Due to pressure from various quarter, Gurudeva agreed at last to work for a livelihood. Thus in 1922 Gurudeva got a job of a clerk in Peshawar. As his mind was not in the job, so he did not continue in it for more than a year. An event took place which ultimately led Gurudeva to resign from the job.

Free from the worldly responsibilities, Gurudeva would henceforward give his entire time in the service of the Lord. Detached from the world, he began to spend his days under the tree and nights on a rock along the bank of a river. So engrossed would he be in the practice of the holy Name that he even did not care for the needs of the body. As days passed by, he felt no need for any physical comfort. Even hunger and thirst disappeared. Complete was his rupture with the world and total the dissocia-tion from his kith-and-kin. At this juncture of time Gurudeva began to treat the ill and sick with the compassion of a physician. Whatever little he earned from his medical practice, he spent it on those who were needy and destitute. Also unhered in was the tradition of performing an yearly *yajna*. Thus from 1923 on-

wards the tradition of holding a yearly *yajna* has continued to this day.

It was the month of March, 1928, when Gurudeva's mother left for her heavenly abode. Gurudeva, after the death of his mother, became more aloof. Along with his aloofness also the intake of food, day by day, decreased. A day comes in the life of a Yogi when mystical ecstasy remains no more a priority; rather the service of the people takes precedence over everything. It was this disposition which could be discerned more and more from the activities of Gurudeva. Around 1938 Gurudeva spent much of his time in spiritual penance at Jalmada. It was at Jalmada where Gurudeva stopped totally taking of any food in solid form. Thus he would take only a glass of tea, and this practice continued till his final *nirvana*. As a consequence of this practice Gurudeva became so weak physically that the bones and veins of the body could easily be seen.

For thirty-five days did Gurudeva continue his practice of self-denial and spiritual penance at Jalmada. One night, finally, he had the experience of indeterminate Being. It is an experience which is the ultimate end of all spiritual seeking. The Yogi who reaches this state remains always absorbed in the Self. Having the ultimate vision of Being, Gurudeva began to wander from village to village, town to town. Wherever he would go, he always stayed at a place which was outside the human habitation.

Gurudeva's life was characterised by such an orientation in which the interior calm of the spirit fused with the external solitude. Abandoned was totally the practice of representative and discursive forms of meditations. In the calm of the night he would leave the room for a solitary place where he could meditate without any disturbance. Thus would Gurudeva fuse the macro- and micro in the meditative space of consciousness.

Gurudeva, till the end of his life, would continuously move from place to place. As a sojourner in the world, he symbolised, like a pilgrim on pilgrimage, the inward pilgrimage of the Spirit.

Gurudeva, however, would not undertake any journey in the month of November, as he always, during this month, lived in Gangothian. After the partition he would spend the month of November in Jgadhari.

There would descend the divine grace of the Lord, in the form of the revelation of the Word, as and when Gurudeva would sink in deep meditation. He would remain, during the moments of divine inspiration, oblivious of his external milieu. In moments of ecstasy there would take place utterances which would reveal the nature of the Word. The flow of revelation would continue for days together. This is how Gurudeva explained the flow of revelation of the Word:

Qs. How is it, sir, possible for you to utter *vani* in Hindi when you know only Urdu?

Ans. The presentation of the discussion will be put before you the manner the divine will intends it to be. Astonished and amazed is *This* at the wonderful play of the Lord. Whenever the *vani* is recited or read, *This* is amazed at the flow of appropriate words which reveal the Word. The utterance of the *vani* is not deliberate. It is spontaneous and *This*, before the will of the Lord, is just a means for the disclosure of the Word. Moves not even a single leaf without the will of the heavenly Father. How could *This* not obey the command of the Lord? *This* speaks or utters the words which the Lord wills or intends. The revelatory words of the *vani* have their source in the luminosity of supreme Consciousness. Being the reflection of Being, they proclaim the good news of the Word. The Lord reveals his nature according to circumstances and conditions of time ... *This* utters that which the Lord wants *This* to utter.

The revelatory *vani* of Gurudeva was penned down by Bhagat Banarasidas who had the opportunity of serving him, day and night, for fifteen years. The *vani*, as time passed by, was published as *Sri Samata Prakash*. Its publication was completed in June 1948 at Siddhakhad (Musoorie). Gurudeva also wrote

some other pieces on spirituality, morality, and on other sundry topics. These pieces have been collected and published as *Sri Samataa Vilas*.

The revelation of the Word is revealed to such a Yogi who has dissolved all objectivity into pure subjectivity. The state of subjectivity is characterised by divine delight. It is a state which the speech cannot express in words, the eyes cannot visualise pictorially, the tongue cannot taste, and the mind cannot conceive. Mind is free from all forms, tastes and colours, yet all of them are contained in it.

Gurudeva, through intense dispassion and detachment, had attained the ultimate state of spiritual transparency whereby he could homologise the micro with the macro. As a Yogi of the highest order, Gurudeva would inwardly both withdraw and manifest the order of creation. Whatever Gurudeva spoke or wrote, reflected the essential nature of the Self. The words and thoughts of Gurudeva flowed forth from the cognitive awareness of the Self.

That which has form is subject to both origination and dissolution. This human body, having form, too vanishes when its times comes. They however, are freed from further origination and dissolution, that is, from *Karma-samsara*, who have sunk deep in the ocean of Supreme Consciousness. Gurudeva, upon entering *parinirvana*, bade farewell to the world of name and form on 4th of Feb., 1954. Thus did he complete his spiritual journey in the world of space-time. Having completed his journey, Gurudeva merged, in the blissful state of *samadhi*, in the Fire of Consciousness.

The Nature of Phenomenon and Numinon

Qs. What type of relationship does the existent being (jiva) have with the physical body (deha)?

Ans. The relationship that exists between the existent being and the body is that of the house-owner who owns the house. In other words, it means that the existent being is the owner of the house, which is called the body. Worthy of reflection is the insight of the *Bhagvadgita* concerning the Primal Being as the Lord and Master of the primal, non-material and psycho-somatic categories of existence.

Qs. What sort of difference exists between the physical body (deha) and the phenomenon (samsara) ?

Ans. The body and the world, being identical, are not different from one another, as the arising of the world is clearly seen to be due to the coming into being of the body. As disappearance of the physical world is experienced upon the destruction of the body, it is self-evident that both of them are of the same nature. What it means is that the world is there on account of the body. The world, when looked from the absolute viewpoint, has no reality of its own. The nature of the world is determined by the kind of body a creature owns. Be, therefore, sure of it that the world is overcome only if the body remains under control.

Qs. What, sir, is the real nature of the world ?

Ans. The world is but an ocean of uncertainties or doubts.

Qs. What kind of relationship exists between me (mera) and the world ?

Ans. On account of ignorance (*ajnanata*) the existent being (*jiva*) gives rise to ego (*aham*) consciousness, and so the arising of the world is facilitated. When the intellect (*buddhi*), through spiritual praxis (*sadhana*), attains the state of aloofness, the world, with the help of spiritual wisdom, remains no more. As the individual being sink or merges in (the ocean of) Truth, the uncertainties or doubts (concerning the world) get destroyed.

Qs. In the Ramayana, sir, the physical body of Lord Rama has been described to be of the nature of pure consciousness and bliss. May the meaning (of this assertion) be clarified!

Ans. Whether the physical body be of an incarnate-being or of a saint, it is nothing more nor less than a compound of five primary elements. The meaning (of this assertion) can be known by studying the context.

Qs. Many a men of wisdom and learning, sir, assert that the physical body of incarnate-beings and of saints transcend the limitations of materiality on account of their divine quality. Is it true?

Ans. It is not so (as the facts are otherwise). The physical body of all phenomenal beings (including of incarnate-beings and saints) is a compound of five elements. (As the incarnate-beings and saints are spiritually developed), they have the power of allowing their bodies to disappear as and when they wish.

Qs. What does existence-in-the-world denote?

Ans. The phenomenal experience of the body denotes the existence-in-the-world.

Qs. Why do the (various) scriptures differ in their viewpoints and standpoints? There are some (scriptures) which maintain that the world is unreal, whereas others explain the world as the expansion of Supreme Consciousness.

Ans. Whether one studies in a school or in a college, it is knowledge that is imparted in both places. The vital difference between the two, however, is the level of knowledge that is being imparted. The standard of knowledge of the school is not as high as that of the college. In likemanner the saints explain the nature of the world in accordance with the depth of insight they have gained. The ultimate and final view of all the saints, however, is identical, as (all of them) assert the omnipresence of the Lord in creation. Some have explained this (viewpoint) to mean that *brahman* is the substratum of every phenomenal category, whereas others have formulated it in terms of identity through the formula: I am *brahman*. As Truth is one and the same, the difference (that exists) is only of style. To the extent intelligence gains (spiritual) depth, to that extent (intuitional) experiences are full of insight. (Truth is always paradoxical), and this fact concerning Truth has been explained by Lord Krishna in the *Gita*. In one place Lord Krishna says that I am in every being and every being is in Me, whereas at another place he asserts that I am in none and none is in Me, for I am aloof and untouched. (These various standpoints) explain the (different) states of the intellect. The intellect expands its horizon of understanding to the extent it gains spiritual maturity.

Qs. What, sir, is God?

Ans. God is that ultimate conscious state or reality by the power of which every phenomenal category of the phenomena exists.

Qs. What is existence or the substratum of existence?

Ans. Existence, as a pure category, is the will power of the intellect which determines the functioning of the body. As the intellect transcends the limitation of the bodily organs of action and perception, there is, however, higher and pure category than the

intellect, namely, *atman*. (Being of transcendent nature), the saints have spoken of it as above and beyond the sense-organs. There used to be a time, dearly beloved, when such discourses concerning Reality used to be held. (As) the spiritual knowledge removes the afflictions of the mind, it is (thus) essential to continue reflecting in this manner.

Qs. What, sir, is the nature of God?

Ans. The (term) God refers to such a spiritual state which is free of and from desires and actions, and thereby non-determinate.

Qs. God, sir, is said to unborn, without shape and form, without hands (and feet), and so on. (If so), then how is it that you have made use of such an image as lotu-like feet in your Vani (holy text) concerning God? May the import of such an image be clarified!

Ans. To grasp the (nature) of Being which is within and which is realized through the practice of recollection and meditation, it is (concerning this Supreme Being) that the image of lotu-like feet is used as a mode of explanation. As no one so far has even seen the head of God, then how can we speak of his feet? (Such expressions) are used to denote our humility, and so we accordingly bow before the Supreme Reality. Whenever (we) bow before someone, (our) sight directly falls upon the feet. Our feelings and ideas about God have to be worshipful. We can express (our) worshipful attitude towards God by making use of such images as, for example, lotus-like feet. The saints, therefore, have explained the imperishable Being, which is within the perishable body, through the image of lotus-like feet.

Qs. May you, sir, tell us as to what constitutes the nature of God?

Ans. (An attempt) shall be made to explain in clear terms (as to what constitutes the nature of God). God may be said to be that ultimate (spiritual) state which comes to be when the dialectic of craving and non-craving is transcended by remaining immersed in one's own-being, or when the intellect attains the state of sameness.

Qs. Two opposing views concerning the Self are to be found in the Scriptures. On the one hand, the Self is seen to be the main agent of action, and so is held responsible for all that it does, and on the other hand, it (the Self) is said to be non-doer. What, then, is the correct view? Which one of these views should one accept to be correct?

Ans. The so-called antithetical views (of the scriptures) must be seen as modes of communicating (the Truth) in accordance with the capacity of the listener. The (Self), in fact, is neither a doer nor a non-doer. Upon the attainment (of spiritual state) the secrets (of the Self) shall be disclosed unto you. One of the (best) means of freeing oneself from (phenomenal) bondage is to see oneself as a mere instrument of the Self, which (by nature) is passive. Through the constant practice of recollection, one attains an (inward) state whereby (the nature) of the subtlest category is (easily) comprehended. Also does one discover the presence of passive Self in each and every (phenomenal) category. Upon the attainment of (perfect) spiritual state the intelligence becomes subtle and suffers no more from the dialectic of doer and non-doer. This spiritual state is difficult to explain. It is (so ineffable) that rightly is it called the state of the dumb. They alone know it who have attained it.

Qs. What, sir, is the difference between the Self and the self?

Ans. The saints say that the self arises when the intellect associates itself with ego. (As far as the Self is concerned), Lord Krishna has given a realistic description of it in the second chapter of the *Bhagavadgita*. He says that the Self is present in every phenomenal category, and so should it be known as the Imperishable. As unborn, the Self is not destroyed. So it is not (subject) to death. Thus it cannot be said that the (Self) shall be or shall not be. Weapons cannot destroy this Self, nor can fire burn it, nor can water wet it, nor can wind dry it. It (the Self) is beyond the reach of the mind and of the sense-organs. The Self is neither born, nor does it die. The relationship between the Self and the body is of the same measure which exists between the owner of the house and the house. (Know) the Self to be eternal, omnipresent,

constant and firm. As the Self is unmanifest, it suffers not (like matter) from any modification. Just as the sun illumines the entire earth with its rays, so does the Self illumine this body with its own light.

Qs. What, sir, (does the term) *brahman* denote? How can it be known?

Ans. The (ultimate) spiritual state within you is called *brahman*. You will know the secrets (concerning Brahman) when you will, through the constant practice of recollection and yogic meditation, become like unto *brahman*. Whenever such a question, in ancient times, was put before a *brahman*-knower, he would remain silent, as that which cannot be known by the senses, or which is beyond the reach of mind and intellect, how can that (*brahman*) be explained with the help of (finite) words? How can such (*brahman*) be communicated in understandable terms which can only be experienced? Attains, however, the intellect *brahman*-like nature when it sinks in the (inwardness) of *atman*.

Qs. What, sir, is the symbolic meaning of the four-armed Narayana resting on a thousand-hooded snake?

Ans. (It is a symbolism) which explains the various inward (spiritual) states. The (mystical) naval centre is represented by the lotus, whereas the Sound-Word is depicted as Narayana. (These symbols are so depicted) because God as Sound-Word is experienced in the lotus-like naval centre.

Qs. What distinguishes the Creator from the creature?

Ans. This problem can be solved only when the (real) nature of the body is known. As and when (for example) the body (experiences) pain, there arises (from the body) a sound which says: "I am in pain." If any part or organ of the body is broken, (there is an immediate response from the body) which says: "A particular part or organ of mine is broken." From this (observation) it becomes clear that there is a (distinct) entity within the body which speaks of the body as "mine". Thus (the expression): "My

eyes, my hands, my relations, my family, etc." It is, thus, proved that the one who says "my" and "mine" is distinct and different from the body. Had the case not been so, then (this entity within the body) would not have said: "The body is mine." The doer or the agent of the deeds of the body is called an individual. (In other words) it means that the individual is one who experiences the bodily deeds (in the form of) pain and pleasure. To the extent the intellect relates itself to the body, to that extent God remains unknown. One may, however, gain the (intellectual) knowledge of God through the study of scriptures or *Vani* of saints, but inwardly (one experiences) the absence of the knowledge (of God). In so far as the intellect goes not inwards and remains bound to the afflictions of the body, it cannot experience (God). Comes to know the intellect that the body is a compound of (elements), that it (the intellect) is distinct from the body, and that the existence of the body is (dependent) on some (divine) power when it (the intellect) attains (spiritual) seriousness by transcending the bodily dialectic of pain and pleasure.

Gains (one) the inward Supreme State of Being when (one) detaches (oneself) from the body and from the bodily attachments. In fact, God and creature are identical, as no difference exists between the two. He gains victory over the world who is the master of his body. To be detached from the attachments of the body denotes right (spiritual) path. He (rightly) is said to be the master of the world who has control over his body. Even the great emperor prostrates before such a person (of detachment).

Qs. What, sir, is the real name of God?

Ans. Various has the name of God been described in the scriptures by saints. The (various) names of God have been determined in proportion to the various ideas concerning the divine glory. In fact, God has no name, as he is nameless.

The Circuit of Becoming

Qs. What (characterizes) the circuit of becoming?

Ans. Even though the intellect experiences imperishable bliss within the perishable and affliction-ridden senses, yet, by remaining bound to the senses, it (i.e., the intellect) is made to undergo different kinds of sense-oriented experiences. (The consequences) are that it remains in a constant state of fear and conflict. The intellect, upon the destruction of the body, gets separated along with the (accumulated) painful experiences. It, then, (re-incarnates itself) by taking an another body in accordance with the (kind of) desires (it has accumulated). By remaining bound to the bodily experiences, the intellect continues the series of painful births and deaths. This process of redeaths and rebirths is called the circuit of becoming.

Qs. How is arising caused? In other words, what causes the existent (jīva) to have a body?

Ans. Craving is the cause for the existent's embodied existence. Imprisoned is the existent in the prison-house of the body the moment craving becomes manifest in the internal organs. (What it implies) is that the existent endeavours to fulfill its craving through his body. (Thus rightly) is this craving termed as delusion.

Qs. What condition does the existent obtain upon the destruction of the body?

Ans. The existent takes to another body upon the destruction of the present one in accordance with the (accumulated) desires. It is what Lord Krishna preached to Arjuna in the following words: "Just as a man, casting off worn-out clothes, puts on new ones, so the embodied self, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into new ones." The self cannot remain even for a moment without a body, that is, in the state of nakedness.

Qs. Is definite period or time (age) necessary for the body to remain alive?

Ans. There is no definite age or period for the body (to remain alive). Both the construction and destruction of the body is dependent upon the deeds (of the past). For the destruction of the body no fixed age is needed. As the body, in fact, itself is the (instrument) of action, it, thus, is called momentary. Whatever life-span is available to the body, it must be spent righteously. (The cultivation of pious life) is the main benefit which can be derived from the perishable body.

Qs. Is untimely death real?

Ans. The so-called untimely death has no real basis. The passing away of the body is caused by the following three afflictions:

- (i) by mental pain,
- (ii) by physical sickness, and
- (iii) by an external event like an accident.

All the three forms of affliction are caused by the corresponding deeds, and so are said to be the cause for the destruction of the body. As the world is a place of delusion, freedom (from delusory pain) is possible only by surrendering unto the Lord, and subsequently the right goal of life is realized. As the destruction of the body is inevitable, it matters little as to when (or at what time) it may happen. Necessary, therefore, it is that this perishable body (be made an instrument) of such righteous deeds which are spiritually beneficial.

Qs. What, sir, is your opinion concerning the rebirth of the embodied self?

Ans. (Addressing to a Muslim devotee): Is it true that the holy *Quran* says that the dead, on the Day of Last Judgement, shall arise and shall be rewarded or punished, in accordance with their deeds, either with heaven or with hell?

(The Muslim devotee): Yes, it is what is written (in the holy text).

(Says Gurudeva): Suppose there is a holy man who leads a very pious and righteous life. He, however, suffers from many physical defects: he has a crooked body, he is lame, he is one-eyed, and so on. (After death) in what manner must this holy man be rewarded? Must he be rewarded with heaven? If so, in what physical form? If he is sent to heaven with a body that is defective, then God is unjust. If he is given a new (or different body), then does not it denote rebirth.

Karman and Divine Grace

Qs. In the Vani is to be found the statement: "Profit they from a long and healthy life who (cultivate) brahmacarya, as it (truly reflects) the nature of one's own-being." (If this be the case), then why you (referring to Gurdeva) suffer from physical afflictions?

Ans. You must, first and foremost, understand (both the text and context) of that which you read. Investigate or enquire that which you know not. Whether the body be of a saint or of a worldly person, it is the (innate) nature (of the body) to suffer from sickness. Sanctified is the life of such a saint who is established in the Supreme Self or whose intellect searches Truth constantly or is Truth-oriented. He is a real *brahmacari* whose intellect, through inwardness, remains sunk in Being and who, while making the use of the nine gates (of the body) for phenomenal activities, is touched neither by pleasure nor by pain (of the body). It is (the saint) who is free from the bodily afflictions. As the body is a compound of matter, it thus suffers from the affliction of sickness. Constant (sickness) of craving is experienced by the person who seeks sense-pleasures through the nine gates (of the body). A real *brahmacari* is one who seeks refuge in the Word-Absolute alone. The intellect, through its association with the body, remains in the state of diffusion by seeking (satisfaction) of desires of the flesh. (As a consequence of this diffusion of the intellect), (the individual being) suffers from both mental and physical disorders from time immemorial. (It is) the seekers or knowers of *brahman* alone who attain the state of peace. A *brahmacari* who is free from such thoughts as "I shall

die," "I am in pain," or "I am well", suffers not from (physical or mental) disorders, as he knows that his (real nature) is immortal. As the body is made up of matter, the rise and fall of sickness is as (natural as that of matter). Even though guarded against every (external) danger, the body undergoes change at fixed periods of time. Even Guru Goraksnath, Rama Krishna or Shankaracarya could not escape the dragnet of physical pain. As the wheel of *karman* is deep and unfathomable, none can escape the effects of accumulated deeds.

Qs. Why does the body suffer from constant changes? Why does not it remain in one condition or state for a longer period of time? What causes (the changes) in the body to happen?

Ans. It is the (nature) of the body to be prone to sickness (and thereby to change). The constant activity of the nine gates (of the body) is nothing but to release impurities. Whether it is childhood, youth or old age -- all of them are painful states (on account of their changing nature). Hidden (potentially) is youth in childhood, old age in youth, sickness in health, and death in life. (A day comes) when this body (at the hands of death) falls to pieces in the process of its living. Even if one lives, instead of one hundred years, for thousands of years, a day comes when death does its work (by tearing the body) to pieces. Even if one (strictly) adheres to the principles of health, the wheel of *karman*, however, spares none, as everyone has to reap the fruit of the deeds (done in the past).

Qs. Although you have attained the holy state of a saint by practising despassion, renunciation and meditative asceticism, yet why is it that you are suffering from much (physical) pain (i.e., illness)?

Ans. (Just as every cause gives rise to an effect), so every deed (*karman*) of past lives is accounted (in terms of *karma-phala*). May be the pain of *This* is due to the deeds of past lives. (The law of causality demands) that the fruit of every past deed has to be reaped (by the doer of the deed). The saints who have attained the state of release (exhaust the fruit of) all accumulated deeds

(in this very life), and so leave nothing (for the future). (It can be seen from the life of) Rama Krishna who suffered from throat cancer or from (the life of) Swami Rama Tirtha who was afflicted by (the sickness) of diabetes. (However painful the fruit of *karman*) may be, they (the saints) never break the law of the Lord. Oftentimes the saints take upon themselves the cross (of fruit) of *karman* of their disciples, and thereby make them free from the bondage (of *karman*). It is compassion in the heart of the saints which urges them to take the cross of pain upon themselves for the good of the world. (To be compassionate and to suffer for humanity) is the highest sign of the saint's spiritual state. Think, therefore, the pain of *This* as a sign for the good of the world.

Qs. Which (type of) deeds terminate in bondage and which ones lead to release (from bondage)?

Ans. Such a deed terminates in bondage which is of selfish nature, whereas a deed, which is of selfless nature, leads to release.

Qs. As a result of past deeds the embodied self goes on committing the unwholesome acts. How can (one) obtain freedom from (this vicious) circle?

Ans. The present form of the body and the (inner) dispositions (of the mind) come to be on account of past deeds. The embodied self (in this present form) performs deeds in accordance with the inherited dispositions (from the past). (What one should do) is not to fear the present; rather should one, with a steadfast mind, continue to perform such deeds which are wholesome. Within each embodied self are to be found both the wholesome and unwholesome tendencies. The non-perverted self cultivates the fellowship of the righteous. The quality of *karman* can be upgraded (only with help of right fellowship). It is for this reason that the fellowship of the righteous is considered to be the most effective means (for the development of moral life). One of the most beneficial aspects of human life is that man can easily grasp his moral deficiencies. (As a result of such understanding), he (i.e., man) can endeavour for the improvement of life. It is also

a (fact) that man can (endeavour) for total freedom from the circuit of becoming.

Qs. One of your disciple, sir, is in great (physical) distress. Would you, through an act of grace, relieve him from this pain?

Ans. None can abolish or remove the consequences of *karman*. The *faqir* himself (referring to himself) has been for last one and half month under the (severe) impact of the wheel of *karman*. As *This* is unable to abolish the personal pain, how, then, can *This* relieve the pain of others? As you have come here with great hope and expectation, the Lord will (definitely) bless you. The (sick) disciple is dear to *This*. Difficult, however, it is to explain which deed of the past has given rise to the (present) state of affairs. The experiences, both pleasant and unpleasant, are the outcome of the wholesome and unwholesome deeds of the past. (As the sick disciple) has done no such deed which can be said to be responsible for his present condition, it is the Divine mercy or grace which alone can relieve him from the pain from which he is suffering. There are, dearly beloved, thousands of people lying sick in hospitals. Why are you not praying for them?

Qs. Is it, sir, possible to remove that which has been written on the screen of the mind? Agitation in mind and mental turmoil seize me the moments my past unbecoming life is thrown up before me by my mind.

Ans. Impossible it is to clean the slate of the mind (from impurities) without worship and devotion of God. The fruits of (one's deeds) will be experienced in the form of pain or pleasure. It is of no significance whether the fruits (are reaped) in this life or in some other.

Qs. Maulani Rumi states that, after having taken various forms of embodied existences in the past, it is only now (in the present form) that the state (of the mind) has become clean (from impurities). (As such) I (have reached a state) which has (freed me) from the attachment for good deeds and hate

for evil deeds and from the fear of death. So I derive my (inner) joy from the will of the Lord. How do you, sir, evaluate this statement (of Rumi)?

Ans. It is a statement (from a person) who has reached the final (spiritual) state. This (spiritual) state of Maulana can be attained only by the one who (sincerely) endeavours for it. The evil deeds that (one) has done must correspondingly be compensated by the double the amount of wholesome deeds. As one has wounded the creation of the Lord, so one must serve the world of living beings. Attain they the state of a holy saint who endeavour at removing the pain (of others) in a right manner.

Qs. What, sir, will be the spiritual state of a disciple on whom your grace falls?

Ans. Definitely shall such a disciple be spiritually uplifted who has allowed the penetration of spiritual ideas to happen. A disciple (of such a quality) may endeavour for the final release after ten or eleven rebirths. The Teacher sows the seed of the mystic word (*mahavakya*) among thousands of disciples. At appropriate time the seed grows. Far better it is, however, to obtain the knowledge of the Self in this very life. In whom the thirst for spiritual knowledge exists, he will definitely find the Teacher. Rewarded are they (spiritually) who serve (with) devotion the *faqirs*, as their blessings are for everyone. A (true) Teacher always desires good of the disciple. Whether one be a mendicant or a householder, one must meditate on the Lord in solitude and with devotion. (Both the mendicant and the householder) will be diffused spiritually if they endeavour not for self-integration. Whatever one may utter or say, it must be uttered with full conviction, as only such a person succeeds (in his endeavour).

The Nature of Mental Faculties: Mind, Intellect and Ego

Qs. What, sir, is mind?

Ans. (The term mind denotes) the faculty of reflection. The power which attempts to reflect over the experiences of the organs of knowledge and action is called mind.

Qs. How, sir, may one bring to cessation the whirls of the mind?

Ans. The elusive nature of the mind cannot be comprehended unless the wholesome and unwholesome conditions of life-in-the-world are properly grasped. Although everyone knows the existential situation of life, there are few who understand it correctly. On account of erroneous understanding (of life-situations), people (generally) take to a path which is unwholesome. The mind is such a (mental) faculty that it can orient itself towards that which is right only if it (gains the capacity) of distinguishing the right from wrong. The best and the only propitious way of bringing to cessation the operations of the mind is to seek the loving refuge in God. This (spiritual) way can be learnt only (at the feet) of a saint. (Once learnt), it must be made one's own by being firm of will. The hurdles of mind shall be, step by step, overcome if the path is cultivated (in the silence of self-abandonment).

Qs. What is the best method which, sir, will not allow the mind to be de-railed?

Ans. The question needs immediate attention. Try to understand it properly (what is being said). The mind can be stabilized provided the four inter-related principles are followed sincerely. (The principles can be cultivated only) if will is determined at attaining the stability of the mind. The four principles are: (a) right determination or will, (b) right path, (c) right teacher, and (d) right effort.

Qs. As the mind is as unstable or (fickle) as the (speed) of wind, it is, thus, difficult to bring it under control. Even after a lot of exertion or endeavour, the mind remains (as) unstable (as before). What would be the natural way of bringing stability to mind (in the context of its inherent unstable nature)?

Ans. Even the (ascetics) have failed in putting the mind on a right track. Their (ascetical practices) of growing long hair, or sitting near the burning fire, or standing in water, etc. (have failed them). As the (nature) of mind is mysterious, it is necessary to develop (devotional) love of God by killing the tendencies of attachment of and for the world. (Thus the sense-fluids) of the body-shaped prison need to be dried up, so that the inward (musical) chord may be struck. Look within, and see the out-pouring of Divine grace. (The grace of the Lord) is not a subject (meant) for the mind, the intellect or the sense-organs. The eyes cannot see it, the ears cannot feel it. It itself is the Path of spiritual experience:

Let the Name of the Lord reside in the mind,
and integrate the mind and the breath of life.
The luminous light of the Word
will you discover within.

Each pore and part of your being
will resound with the eternal Word of Liberation.
The tune of the unstruck sound
will you hear
when exhalation and inhalation are integrated.

His word and deed shall be
of one accord who discovers
unity between microcosm and macrocosm.
In the space within
flows the stream of ambrosia,
and few are there who drink it
by listening to the immortal words of Guru.

They shall suffer
in the never-ending bondage
who hope and thirst for more.
The play of the Lord is strange,
for mysterious are the words
that righteous sing.

When the luminous light of consciousness
did I discover,
the knots of endless of becoming were broken.

They succeed in crossing the ocean of becoming
who walk upon the edge of life
with actions that are pure.

This infirm frame (that is, body)
is filled with the immortal nectar.
Speak, therefore, the word of Vani.
Bring an end to the sense of doership.
Meditate constantly on that that is Eternal.

Nirvana did I realize
when the inner Light illumined itself.
Mangat has discovered the Creator of all
Who is eternal and imperishable.

As there is nothing (worthwhile) to be pursued apart from God,
so every creature (has to be viewed) as (reflecting) the Divine
nature. Spiritual perfection shall be realised provided attention
is turned at the feet of the Lord. Difficult, indeed, it is to cultivate
(the virtue) of dispassion.

Says everyone: walk, walk (upon the path).
Fortunate few (alone) reach the goal.
(The secret) of the Path shall be known
when the true Guru shall be encountered.

You may ask more questions on your next visit. Go now, and rest. It is not (advisable) to stay near the *faqirs* (for long periods of time).

Qs. As the mind, sir, is strange, is it possible to obtain freedom from its (whirls)?

Ans. The mind, dearly beloved, is both a friend and an enemy. It can be turned either towards that which is unwholesome or towards that which is wholesome. It can at a given period of time be disposed only towards either one of them. In both conditions, however, the mind, intellect and the sense-organs remain intact. It is only their (that is, of mind, intellect and sense-organs) nature that changes. In order to change their habits, the best method or way is that of renunciation. It is through this method alone that the goal can be reached. Continue reflecting in this manner, and you shall reach the goal.

Qs. There arise, sir, such states when the mind loses interest in everything. (In such states) the mind becomes agitated. Can you tell us what causes (such states) to be? And also the means of getting rid of (such states)?

Ans. Caused are (such states of mind) by the absence of a definite goal of life as well as by the lack of a definite programme for the realization of the goal. Know this to be (the cause of such states).

Qs. If the case (concerning the mental states) be such, then such a (mental) condition should be permanent. This, however, has been observed that such condition(-s) come and go. May you kindly make us understand (the reasons for it)?

Ans. True it is to say that the mind is a great trickster. By giving rise to hopes and expectation, it (i.e., the mind) remains attached to

them. It struggles for the fulfillment of these hopes, and so remains constantly engaged and occupied (with one or the other thing). Due to (such hopes and engagements) (the states of the mind) remain unknown and unperceived. The physical body basically is constituted by three characteristics or dispositions. Whenever the good is dominant, the intellect has the experience of ease by appeasing (the mind). Whenever the dynamic feature is dominant, the intellect, on account of (inner) turmoil, turns towards the worldly activities, and so does not, even for a moment, experience peace. Whenever the feature of inertia is dominant, the condition that comes to be is identical with the one you have spoken about. (It is a state) in which the intellect experiences diffusion and suffers from the lack of peace. (It is a state) in which inertia and sloth have the (final say). It is what may be called the strange play of the illusory world. What you need is to fix the goal of life, and which can be realized by following a definite programme with a determined will. It is only then that all these states (of the mind) can be overcome.

Qs. Although the diffused (states) of the mind may not be substantial, is there, however, some other (state) apart from (this one)?

Ans. (There are some aspects of life) like wealth, age and youth which are as unstable as the dew-drops on the petals of a lotus.

Qs. Even after studying the revelatory words of the Granth Sahib, the mind obtains not freedom from agitations. Please show us the way which terminates in peace!

Ans. Daily do we read in the *vani* of Guru:

Fulfilled is the search in the Word of them who are pure of mind.

What does this mean? Have you not discovered it even after having read the *vani* for so long?

Fall in the ditch (of darkness) both the Guru and the disciple when greed seizes them.

The *vani* of Nanak is not wrong. It is you who does not want to

search further. The Word as the Supreme Lord continuously illumines (every thing). (Rightly) have Gurus said that they who drink the wine of the Word, remain inebriated. Proclaims Nanak: "Remain I intoxicated day and night by drinking the wine of the Divine Name." Repeatedly has the glory of the Divine Name been sung in the scriptures. Unless the true Name is not continuously reflected and meditated upon, it shall remain hidden unto you. You (as a Sikh) think that right it is to kill animals by separating the head (of the victim) from its body, whereas the Muslims oppose (your way of killing the animals). Which commandment of the Guru have you obeyed? None among the Gurus has permitted the killing of animals or eating of the flesh. Does the intellect become pure merely by wearing the bracelet around the wrist or by growing hair on the head? Make true faith your own. Remove ignorance with the comb of wisdom. Wear the turban of love on your head. The saints asked (you) to wear the bracelet of service with the intention that (you) may not abandon the true sentiment of service. The drawers (you) wear are the symbol of modesty. Most essential is the ascetical practice of non-violence in the path of *dharma*. When the saints even do not allow even to think such thoughts which are harsh, then how can they preach the killing of dumb animals? Polluted at present is the intellect of people. Freedom from the cycle of repeated deaths and births is realized only in and through the grace of Guru. A true Sikh is one who, by abandoning the false and counterfeit, incarnates what the Gurus have said. How is it possible to obtain the Supreme Person unless the deeds are pure, the speech is clean, and the mind is (in the state) of equilibrium? The (essence) of the Gate of the Guru shall be understood by you when, through spiritual effort, the light of the Word becomes manifest.

Qs. What, sir, is intelligence or intellect?

Ans. That which determines (is intelligence). The power which understands the lacks of the mind or (distinguishes) right from wrong is called the intellect.

Qs. How, sir, can it be determined that we are moving towards

the authentic self-same nature? As all our activities take place within the phenomenal realm, so all our endeavours are accordingly spent in coordinating them. May you kindly explain to us as to why it happens?

Ans. Your analysis (concerning the diffusion of activities within the phenomenal realm) is correct. All deeds take place within the realm of nature. The intellect takes the role of an agent of deeds when it associate itself with the I-maker (*ahamkara*). When the intellect sinks in the Self, it attains the state of a non-doer. Whatever deeds, through the medium of the body, Nature accomplishes, it (that is, Nature) reaps the fruits (of the deeds done) thereof. In this condition whatever deeds are done by the body on account of its nature are of spontaneous character. The body suffers destruction upon the attainment of ripe or proper age. The passive intellect is in no way associated with this happening (that is, with the deeds and destruction of the body). (The point may be illustrated) by taking the example of the eyes. It is the nature of the eyes to perceive, and so it will continue to see (whatever comes in its sight). (While seeing, the eyes) do not have the experience of good and evil. The tongue will continue to chew (food), but it will be unable to experience taste (when the intellect merges with the Self). To the extent the intellect comes close to the Self, to that extent the experience of pleasure will vanish. (When this state is experienced), be sure that (you) are moving towards the Self.

Qs. What is the condition of the intellect when an individual attains the state of true self-same nature?

Ans. The intellect remains no more when it attains the true self-same nature. It is a state in which everything is experienced as the Self. It is a state in which arguments and counter-arguments come to an end. If (the doubt) in terms of ifs and whys still lingers, then the true self-same state is not attained.

Qs. What, sir, is the function of the intellect?

Ans. It is the function of the intellect to think, to decide and to enquire.

Qs. On what, sir, does intellect feed itself?

Ans. The intellect feeds itself (with the food of) thoughts. Attains the intellect the same or identical nature of thoughts with which it feeds itself. For this reasons the saints have always emphasized upon the need for purity of thoughts.

Qs. Which kind of intellect, sir, is said to be pure?

Ans. That form of intellect is called pure which firmly believes that God alone is true and rest of the world of name and form is transient. Four are the states of the intellect (and they are):

- i. unconscious
- ii. careless
- iii. fully aware
- iv. pure

An unconscious or unawakened intellect is that which conducts itself concerning the affairs of the world through imitation. It is a state of non-reflection. Such an intellect remains immersed in itself. The people of this kind of intellect are common.

A careless or degenerate intellect, even after knowing what is right and what is evil, goes on committing unwholesome deeds. In sufficient number will you find people of this kind.

The fully awakened intelligence is the one which understands (everything) properly, and also acts accordingly. People (of such intelligence) are few.

Pure intelligence is the last and final state. The intelligence of such people is said to be pure on account of the fact that (such intelligence alone) understands and knows the real, and thereby dissociates itself from the triple-natured world of name and form. (Thus) it firmly establishes itself in the indivisible and imperishable Word.

Qs. Why is it, sir, that man thirst for knowledge? To the extent the intellect investigates the phenomenal world, to that extent

does it suffer from afflictions. Why, sir, is it so? Kindly explain this (mystery).

Ans. To investigate is the nature of the intellect. Unless the full enlightenment concerning self-same nature of the Self is not attained, the desire for investigation will haunt the intellect. Inherent nature of the intellect it is to investigate and enquire. Suffers (the intellect) from the thirst for further knowledge to the extent it remains bereft from (the knowledge) of the own-being of the Self. Suffer they from sorrow, conflict and from desire for further knowledge who take matter as the ultimate. In other words, such people attain not perfect peace. It is what characterises the sorrowful nature of the world. The (spiritual) perfection is attained when the intellect engages itself in the search of the own-being of the Self. What it means is that the perfect peace is realized upon the attainment of total awareness and insight. It is this state which is spoken of as *nirvana*. The effort and search, which are not directed towards the (ultimate) Truths, terminate in sorrow and this (sorrowful) condition is the lot of almost all the intellectuals.

Qs. May you, sir, explain as to what is (impure) intellect and what is the state of Awareness?

Ans. To the extent the intellect suffers from impurity, to that extent it remains subject to ego. (It means that the only concern the intellect has) is to care for the well-being of the body. Such an (impure) intellect, in other words, remains engaged in providing the necessary means of comfort to the sense-organs of the body. When the intellect attains awareness, it begins to understand the perishable nature of the body, and that there is nothing in the body which may be cherished (or loved). The love of God comes to be when such-like thoughts become ripe. (A ripe intellect) always thinks that it is far better to worship that Supreme Power which has given rise to this body. With (constant) remembrance the love of God, in contrast to that of the body, increases manifold. It is a sign or mark of the saints that they think not of the body, but of that Light which illumines the body.

The nature of the world (or of the worldly) is to abandon the (immortal) nectar, whereas the blessed ones seek not the world but the drink of immortal nectar!

Qs. What, sir, is ego?

Ans. An agent or doer of action is called ego.

Qs. From where, sir, has come the sense of doership or "I am the doer of action"? Was there any need for the Lord to create such a vast and complex creation?

Ans. No body so far has been able to tell the source of doership. This sentiment (of doership) has come into being in the same manner as the wave upon water. Who can tell the cause of it? Just as the wave and water are not different, but are one, and if looked at subtly, the (form) of the wave vanishes and water alone remains, similarly the world has its being in the Self alone and apart from It (the world) is nothing. (To take one thing for the other) is called ignorance or darkness, and it has neither the beginning nor an end. In-between does (one) see this vast expansion (of creation). When the intellect enters the ultimate blissful state of the Self, the world (of name and form) remains no more. It is a (spiritual) state of wonder. The self-same peace, from birth to death, is not attained through worldly achievements or failures. Sorrow continues to be to the extent the dialectic of grasping and abandoning, attachment and hatred vanish not. Every creature, from king to pauper, from Brahma to the smallest ant, is in a state of fear. Unless one, with a concentrated mind, reflects over the nature of phenomena, it is not possible to know what is real Reality.

Qs. From where and why has the sense of doership come into being?

Ans. No (proper) reason can be given about the birth of I-ness or doership. This play is being played without a cause. This state of (doership) belongs to the individual existent. This state of (doership) of the mind is of the nature affliction. Upon attaining the sense of doership, the individual being remains engaged, day

and night, in satisfying the desires of the senses. Suffers the individual being in the heat of the fire of delusion when the fruit of the deed comes into being. It is an incomprehensible drama. The individual, even for a moment, does not want to give up (this play), nor does (the play) give him up. Difficult, indeed, is to abandon the sense of doership even after making many attempts. It is the (doership) which is the root of all (mental) dispositions. The dispositions will not disappear to the extent the intellect thinks in terms of "my" and "mine" body.

Sorrow and Ease

Qs. Why, sir, is the world (full of) sorrows?

Ans. When the mind desires an object or is determined to obtain some (sense) pleasure, (the consequences) are sorrow when (the effort) fails. In other words, the unfulfilled state of the mind is called sorrow. Sorrow, in fact, has no nature of its own. Both ease and pain are the consequences of the will of the mind.

Qs. What, sir, is the cause of pain.

Ans. The root-cause of pain is the attachment with the body and body-related objects.

Qs. This living being, sir, desires day and night pleasures of the body. Under the control of desires, (this living being) performs various kinds of actions in the world. As a consequence (of various deeds) he gets caught in the circuit of death and birth. Sir, if this (analysis) is correct, then what is the remedy?

Ans. The saints have said that the real sickness of man lies in his hankering after bodily pleasures, and so is seen to be the cause for all (kinds of) sorrow. It is right to say that man gets caught in the net of becoming on account of his desire for pleasure. Thus must the mind be made to understand: "oh of mind, the transient pleasures you seek are the real forms of pain. Even the pleasures you have enjoyed have not given the real and lasting peace. Think, for example, over the pleasures you have enjoyed and the

state after the enjoyment. Learn from it."

Qs. This living being, sir, is afraid of death. It always endeavours for non-death, for non-pain, and for various comforts. Why is it so?

Ans. No (worldly) wealth can measure the knowledge (of the Spirit). No ease can surpass (the ease of) sameness.
Life and hope are not same, (and)
No greater pain is there than that of greed.

All living creatures: men, animals, birds and insects want to live. None is ready to abandon the body. Even on exchanging ideas (concerning death), none wants to die while living. It is the men of knowledge who, having no regard for the body, alone are ready to face death, and apart from them none is willing to die. All clever moves fail before the wheel of Time or Death. Even when alive, the body remains full of filth. The changing nature of the body keeps the objective law intact. Upon the visitation of old age (we), with folded hands, say: "Lord, have mercy upon us. Save us, O Lord."

The living creature, in fact, does not want to die. It is only the desire (to live) which compels (the individual) to prolong (the span) of his life. Otherwise there is no fun in living for long. Such an embodied existent alone, indeed, can experience peace who has had the inner illumination. In this state (of illumination) one lives in peace even for thousands of years. A desire-filled individual becomes helpless when frailty visits the body. As a helpless being does he call upon death. Prefer they not to leave the physical frame who are greedy and hedonists. There was a businessman who lived in the Tehsil of Khota, District Rawalpindi. He had sons and (many) grand-children: (He had amassed so much wealth that) many chests in the house were full of gold coins. He would not allow his children or grand-children to touch (the chests). When the time of his death approached, the children brought some rice for the purpose of distributing it among the poor. They asked the (dying) father for some money (for charity purposes). (Instead of conceding the demand of the children), the

father retorted: "I am not going to die, and why should I contribute towards charity. You want to rob my house while I am still alive. Take everything, and keep it in the house. I know how I have earned the money and how I have amassed it. You know not the worth of it". While saying so, the old man fell from his pillow, and thereby breathed his last. That very moment the children took away the keys, which were lying under the pillow of the father. The children distributed the wealth of their father among themselves before informing the people in the neighbourhood about the death of their father.

All living beings seek ease. None wants to be sorrowful. Is there any living being in the world who always remained in the state of ease and never experienced pain? There is nothing in the hands of man. He simply is caught in the net of the results of his deeds. All living beings are wanderers who wander from birth to birth. Remain they even both in ease and pain, profit and loss who are given to the worship of the Lord. Such beings, whether embodied or not, can remain always in the state of peace. An intellect (disposed towards devotion) is obtained only through the fellowship of the righteous. The greatest hope that man cherishes is to live a (long) life. (It can be observed) from the pain which an insect suffers when he is separated from filth. Man can have the treasure of contentment, and thereby a life of peace, only if he is blessed with Divine grace. No worldly object can satisfy the cravings of the mind. May the Lord save all beings from the mud of greed. Craving itself is the Vaitarni river (that needs to be crossed). It is the blessed ones alone who cross this river with the (help of) gnosis-boat.

Qs. What characterizes the bondage of man?

Ans. The bondage of an existent being consists of ignorance. On the disappearance of ignorance shall it be known that in fact no bondage exists. It is a (spiritual) theme which cannot be known through study; it can be known experientially alone. In this gross body the Self is to be found in the same manner as butter in milk. (Although present in milk), it (the butter) is not visible to the eyes. On knowing the Self, the tangible creation remains no

more. It is for this reason that the saints have said: the Self can only be experienced and not known intellectually. (Seek) the experience of the Self! (On knowing the Self) you will come to know that the bondage of ignorance neither existed nor exists.

Qs. How does the wheel of the world move on and how shall freedom from it be obtained?

Ans. The wheel of the world has always been, and shall always be, in motion. The *faqirs*, keeping in view the wheel of the world, keep themselves free from it. The men of ordinary status keep struggling with it; and oftentime dislike even to hear the Word of the Spirit. The individual being endeavours for freedom from the wheel of the world when its painful burden becomes heavy. Learning a lesson from it, he orients himself towards the path of righteousness. The world is full of suffering. There is nothing in the world but pain. Really is he a man of low quality (animal) who knows not it (i.e. the painful nature of the world). The wider the engagement with the world, the wider the circuit of pain. Thus should one make certain rules of life, and in accordance with these rules must the affairs of life be conducted, so that mind may have peace. The first imprisonment that the individual existent suffers from is that of doership or of ego; the second that of *karma* and the third of the fruit (of *karmān*). It is this sickness of craving from which the individual suffers from. The saints have prescribed an easier way of obtaining freedom from this wheel, and it is: cut asunder the roots of doership (i.e. of ego), which, in other words, means: abandon I-ness and leave everything unto the will of the Lord. Through the constant practice (of self-abandonment), the intellect will become pure, and thereby will merge with that which is ultimately Real. He will, then, come to know that the Self alone is real and that the world is unreal. This (spiritual) state is called the state of *gnosis*. In other words, it is a state in which the intellect is able to differentiate the real from unreal. If a man of such a (spiritual) state may experience mental turmoil, it is like a man who, while on the bank of a stream, escape the heat (of the summer) by jumping (in the cool waters) of the stream. The man of this state obtains freedom from (mental turmoil) by sinking himself in pure consciousness. Finds

the intellect itself untouched by the world the moment it integrates itself, through the practice of spiritual yoga, with the Self. It is a condition which is spoken of as the state of gnosis. Remain absorbed in the bliss of own-being the yogis who attain this (spiritual) state (of knowledge).

Qs. How can freedom from physical pain be realized?

Ans. The source of every form of ill is the physical pain. The best mark of human life consists in attaining more and more purity in the crucible of (this) painful struggle. It means that the highest degree of purity be realized through what one eats, through (personnel) conduct, and through fellowship. Purity in and of food may be maintained by not eating meat. Purity of personnel life means to lead a life of contentment with what one earns honestly. Purity of conduct denotes to speak and act in accordance with what is true. That may be said to be holy fellowship which is characterized by men of true righteousness. When purity, with such (spiritual) praxis, becomes constant, the intellect awakens (fully), and thereby firmly walks upon the path of Truth. The heart of life's advancement lies in it alone.

Qs. What is the nature of ease and sorrow?

Ans. To remain subject to passions is sorrow; and the abandonment of passions is ease. Get caught all creatures in the circuit of pain by performing deeds upon deeds. Even then the "thirst" remains unquenched. It is called the whirlpool of delusion. Ignorant, indeed, is the man who wants to satisfy the passions through the dialectic of *karman* and its fruit. (Such people are fools) because the changing character of the dialectic of *karman* and its fruit gives rise to the expansion of passions.

To be desireless is the highest form of peace. To be full of desires denotes the highest form of pain. Difficult, indeed, it is to remain untouched by the expansion of *karman* unless the root-cause of desire, namely, the sense of I-ness (*aham-bhava*), is not abandoned.

Qs. How can real peace be attained?

Ans. Whether one be a householder or a mendicant, the real peace can be had only by orienting life towards the Spirit. It is a peace which transcends the (dialectic) of joy and sorrow. The Law of the Lord is one and same for all. He alone shall be blessed with peace who will follow the way of Truth. Pain shall be in the lot of the one who, under the influence of ego, will cause disruption.

Peace or Bliss

Qs. May you, sir, kindly clarify (the spiritual) aspect of peace! It has been found out that man utters - "Oh, I have attained peace"— as and when he experiences the moments of relaxation. Is this real peace or is there some other nature of (real) peace?

Ans. People call it (relaxation) peace to please themselves. You may call it as the reflection of real peace. Real peace is not found in the body. The body (is a place) of both ease and unease. The (real) peace is in no manner related either to ease or unease. It (the real peace) is different (both from physical ease and sorrow). The state of perfect peace is said to be that in which the intellect merges in the selfsame conscious Light by the power of which this body is illumined.

Q.. I have, sir, been unable to understand as to who is the experiencer and how (the experiencer) experiences when the intellect sinks (deep) in absorption? May you kindly explain the secret!

Ans. How, dear one, shall it be explained who the experiencer is and how (the experience) is experienced! Be of firm resolution, as it (the knowledge of the secret) is not far away (from you). You will know it (the secret) by itself upon its attainment. Apart from life-force there is nothing. The salt wanted to find a place (for itself) in the sea, but alas, it lost itself! An agitated intellect set out in search of the source. Knew (the intellect) not where (the source) had gone, how it had gone! Consciousness alone remained.

Qs. What, sir, is the significance of the bliss in which the saints remain absorbed? Can it be perceived by the eyes or explained through the medium of words?

Ans. Even though (*This*) wants to speak yet cannot speak. They who have attained (the ultimate) state, have become like unto It. That which is ultimate can neither be spoken nor heard. For this reason It is said to be beyond the sense-organs. Before whom can the bliss of this ultimate state be expressed? Who is (there) to pay attention to such (spiritual) aspects? In former times discourses used to be held on matters of Spirit in saintly congregations. The present times are such that in the assembly of saints (no more are such discussions held). (Instead) it is the smoke of tobacco (that will be found in such assemblies). Blessed are you in having met many saints. The peace for which man, day and night, searches, that peace, in fact, is to be found in the fellowship of saints. (Man) neither gives up the attachment of the self nor does he (easily) take to the path of Truth. (As far as the body is concerned), it gets destroyed at its appropriate time. It is its nature. Remain the ignorant ones deprived of real peace by remaining absorbed (in the activities of the body). Few blessed ones alone have the love for the fellowship of righteous. When the (so-called) men of God have given up their discipline (*dharma*), (what then) will ordinary men do? It is through the light of renunciation alone that faith among men may be born. May the Lord bless all with a righteous intellect.

Qs. What, sir, is the real (nature) of bliss?

Ans. This entire theme, dear one, may be expressed in one sentence: Abandon the desire of the body and of the body-related objects. You shall come to know the real nature of bliss by itself when, by giving up all kinds of desires, contentment seizes you. The (mystery) of it is beyond words.

Qs. How can real peace be attained?

Ans. Real peace shall be attained when one, with great endeavour, surrenders at the feet of the Lord. Every creature wants (to

experience) inward peace which is pure. (This pure peace) is attained by renouncing all desires and needs. It is through the love of God and through the renunciation of the bodily attachment that desires are overcome. The (spiritual) state that comes to be through the practice of simplicity, truthfulness, service, contemplation enables (one) to abandon the bodily attachment. To give up the needs which are unnecessary and leave (everything) unto the will of God -- such dispositions deliver one from selfish tendencies, and such a state should (be considered) as reflecting the real Benevolence.

That disposition is godly which is free from all selfish tendencies, which does good to all creatures in accordance with the Divine will. The purity of the body, of the family, of the society and of the nation comes to be only when (one) is disposed towards God. One can improve (the quality of life) by cultivating the divine sentiments. The best and real means for the attainment of real peace is to give up all forms of selfishness, and thereby serve all beings selflessly and in accordance with one's ability.

Qs. Can peace be obtained through the body?

Ans. No! The body (is a place) of ease and unease. Peace can be had only through the experience of God whose nature is that of Light, (a Light) which illumines this lifeless body. To have the experience of this Supreme Power, called God, sit near the Perfects. By sitting near the Perfects, you shall learn how to be close to God.

The Purpose of Human Life

Qs. What, sir, is the purpose of human life?

Ans. The purpose of human life is (the attainment) of peace, i.e., a peace which suffers not from the fear of change. The state (of fearless peace) can be attained only after a thorough investigation is made concerning (the nature of) the body and of the life-force that is within it. The individual being, on account of ignorance, seeks peace in the things of the world rather than within. As the world and its objects are perishable, so the peace that is acquired from them, too, is perishable, and so accordingly give rise to sorrow and unease. The (real) peace, which the individual desires for himself, comes to be when he shares it with the others.

Qs. What is the goal of human life?

Ans. The search of the own-being of Truth (is the goal of life).

Qs. What benefit does acquire (to man) by having a human body?

Ans. While wandering in the world, the bodily creatures are made to undergo the various bodily experiences. To the extent there is increase in the experiences of the body, to that extent there is the expansion (of the field) of unease. As the emperor, in accordance with the prevailing conditions, may (experience) helplessness and "thirst", so a pauper accordingly wanders with a sorrowful (mind). (What it means is that) that every embodied existent constantly suffers from helplessness and unease. The greatest

blessing a man has of having a human body is that he is enabled to understand the dark secrets of life, and thereby does he endeavour for the attainment of true peace.

Divine Trust and Faith

Divine Trust and Faith

Qs. What is the (nature) of my relationship with God? Does the forgiveness of sins merely depend upon divine pleasure? If not, then what should we ask from God? If the fruit of one's deeds has to be reaped, is it then necessary to be afraid of God? Why, then God is said to be love?

Ans. God is that (supreme) Power whose essence is that of bliss, who is full of perfections and who is eternal. He transcends the dialectic of worldly joy and sorrow, as (he) is real joy (in himself). He is the source of every force or power. In contrast (to God), man, under the influence of *maya*, is always made to undergo painful (experiences), i.e., he is never free from pain. From birth to death, man is in search of real joy. Ultimately all his (endeavours) end in failure. Thus (man) is never happy with the world. To transcend the unhappiness and unrest (caused by the world), the path (that is open to man) is that of devotion and worship of God.

The attachment for the world decreases not unless faith in God is firmly established within. (For a faithless person) there is increase (in attachment), and so every effort of his terminates in the pit of darkness. On account of ignorance, he is unable to recognize the real (nature) of joy. It is what may be called the worldly unhappiness. Whether it be a king or a pauper, both of them suffer from identical unhappiness. (What it means is that) that every creature suffers from the burning flames of desire. Even upon acquiring the desired object, the individual attains not the real peace. Upon the destruction (of the desired object), the individual experiences much pain. For this reason the world is

said to be a place of sorrows. The more (one) involves (oneself) with the world, the more does he experience painful afflictions. Finally, upon the destruction (death) of the body, he (the individual) takes another body.

This painful (condition) continues to be unless relationship with the imperishable peace or with the divine power is established. The individual is a part of the Divine Power. Thus without knowing his real nature or own-being, man will never obtain deliverance from (the pain) of cravings. The worship of God, or (the knowledge) of one's being, is the only way of obtaining freedom from mental unrest. Freedom from the perishable net is realized the moment faith in God is made firm. Worship of God is the (main) means of obtaining freedom from (the circuit) of birth and death. Ignorant is he who worships God for worldly accomplishments. Whether one worships God or not, each individual has to reap the consequences of his wholesome or unwholesome deeds. The worship of God is specially (prescribed) so that evenness may be maintained when faced by transient ease and unease. One should face every condition courageously! One should seek deliverance from pain! Such a state, indeed, is that of deliverance.

One should reflect over the lives of those who have worshipped God as to how they (the saints) have endured both ease and unease. That state is said to be of real joy in which no interference of transient joy and sorrow takes place. For the attainment of this peaceful state the worship of God is necessary. Freedom from joy and sorrow, that is, from birth and death, is not possible unless this state (of real) joy is attained.

The Divine Power is subject neither to Time nor to *karman*. It is in every condition and is of the nature of bliss. The individual being, on the contrary, remains always under the fear of Time and *karman*. To be free from the pain (of this fear), necessary it is to have love of one's own-being. It is this condition which is the state of highest bliss.

The worldly ease, in fact, gives rise to pain. Neither the (sense)

experience remains constant, nor are mind or sense-organs constant. Thus false temptations always terminate in helplessness and impatience, that is, no contentment comes to be even after acquiring lot of sense experiences. Instead there is pain. Having reflected over this pain, the saints take refuge in God, which always is and which is of blissful nature.

By thinking of sense pleasures as true, the individual being suffers from ignorance. Where is the ease when body remains no more? Pain alone is there. It is to understand this pain, that is, to obtain freedom from birth and death, that worship of God is prescribed.

Even though the individual being is a treasure-house of the body, yet it is not able even to raise a single hair upon the body. How can that object be the source of ease which exists on borrowed help? Thus the real lovers, by abandoning the realm of ignorance, engage themselves in the search of that which is real. The body is a perishable commodity, and so its attachment can only give rise to pain. Much and greater (real) joy is attained by realizing that Power by the power of which this perishable body remains alive. The real aim of life is to make search of that Supreme Power which gives rise to different (material) elements and which expresses itself through various shapes and colours.

God alone is true, whereas the world is unreal. Thus the real joy lies in the search of that which is true. Love of the false is sorrow. One should pray unto God for that endurance and peace by which deliverance from pain may be realized. Think over it seriously: Freed are they from the sorrows of life who contemplate over that which is the substratum of creation. Thus should one worship the Lord!

The real joy, which is of one taste, is of the nature of God. It glows within every creature. Thus should one seek God by freeing oneself from the experiences of the flesh. The individual remains tied to the cause of suffering. Obtains he the eternal joy who, by worshipping the Lord, frees himself from the snares of pain. It is the benefit which (man) has of having a human body

Contemplate over that which is True,
This treasure alone is of value.
Mangat has attained the highest state,
And so is free from the terror of Time.

Qs. Does one obtain ease by believing in God? Does unbelief cause pain?

Ans. Obtain they freedom from the cravings of the body who believe in God, and thereby are able to lead a life of righteousness. (Thus the righteous) alone is blessed with peace which is stable and permanent. Suffer they from the dialectic of ease-unease who believe not in God, and thereby remain deprived of (real) peace.

Qs. Blessed shall, indeed, we be if you, sir, bless us with true faith. In your letters you write: May Lord bless you with true faith! Somehow we remain weak in faith. Some defect (within us) remains somewhere!

Ans. Indeed, some defect is there. You will, thus, have to make yourself ready for the sacrifice which Nanak asks of you. Says Nanak:

Offer the object unto him (God) who is its Master,
Surrender, therefore, with a bowing head unto will Divine!

Qs. How and in what manner should faith in God be measured?

Ans. (Faith in God) is the greatest test (man has to pass through). Remain believers in God even both in pain and joy. (For the man of faith) to surrender unto the Divine is perfectly natural. (Such a person) is neither elated by the kingly throne, nor do the worldly sorrows depress him.

Qs. In what way, sir, shall faith in God be made firm?

Ans. Three are the ways (which will help one in affirming faith in God): (i) Faith in God arises with firm conviction at such moments of existential crises when the pain of life becomes

unbearable, and all the avenues of hope and succour disappear.

- (ii) Attain they the state of firm faith, through the grace of saints, whose intellect, although pure, is not completely free from taints.
- (iii) Transcends he the glitter of the world and the delight of the senses who, having grasped the transient nature of the body, sees every phenomena as of (momentary nature).

To grasp the nature of the body, to obtain freedom from embodied existence and to comprehend each move of the flesh is the purpose of all religions, sects, of the Vedas and of philosophy. Neither the ills nor the working of the world will ever cease to be. Hidden is the good of and for the world in treating the sickness from which one suffers. Even in most critical situations of life must one regulate one's worldly activities, that is, definite time must be set apart for worldly deeds. One should never allow oneself to be drawn into the activities of the world apart from the time that is set for it. Necessary, indeed, it is for one's own good to remain punctual in the use of time.

Qs. (As the mystery of faith is unfathomable), is it possible to make it more revealing?

Ans. Five are the states (through) which faith (is reflected). In the initial stage (man) has more trust in his own conditioned experiences. (It is a state) in which man cares little as to what is right and what is not, and so accordingly directs all his energies towards one goal: to gather as many instruments or means of physical comfort as possible. To this category belong most of the people. The second stage of faith is characterized by an orientation in which ethical values are given due place. (In other words) it is a (spiritual) stage in which belief in right means for the acquirement phenomenal delights is predominant, and (the man of this state) understands the difference between right and wrong, and accordingly employs only such means which are moral. Though (this state) is a little higher than the first one, the people of this category, however, are far and few. The third state of faith understands the perishable condition of all phenomenal experiences, and so is accordingly characterized by aversion for all such experiences which are transient. Men (of this state)

remain detached from phenomenal experiences, as they want to go beyond them. Scarce are the people of this quality (of faith) in the world. The fourth state is characterized by firm faith in the Being of God. That which is contrary to faith falls not in this category. Men of this realm, indeed, are few in the world. The fifth state of faith is totally oriented towards God. Both success and failure are seen (by the men of this category of faith) in terms of Divine Will and so both pleasure and pain are accepted with resignation. Men of such life may be counted on fingers. Definitely shall you (spiritually) be uplifted if you are firm in your true faith.

Qs. How can, sir, (the state of) firm faith be attained?

Ans. Firm faith is either to be found among fools or among men of high spiritual state. The men of middle category swing between faith and doubt. What (actually) is needed is firm and true faith. Victorious shall definitely be the men of faith if they walk upon the straight path. Even if men of faith may stray from the path, the path shall (for them) be made straight. There is, however, a condition, and that is: Conviction should be firm and with conviction must one walk (upon the path of spirit).

Qs. The thrust, sir, of your teaching seems to be the doctrine of faith. (Is it not a fact) that we wander from place to place in search of Divine faith? How can (mere) faith save us from death?

Ans. Fearless, indeed, are men of faith, and such men are not afraid of death. He sees happenings and non-happenings in terms of Divine Will, and so remains ever courageous (spiritually).

Qs. What is true faith?

Ans. The world is a magical projection (of God), but the player of magic (that is, God) is true and real. Knowing thus, one who believes in the Magician is said to be a (man of) true faith.

That Master alone is the doer of everything who has given rise

to this wonderful creation. Whether (this body) lives for ten days or for hundred thousand years, it is untrustworthy, as ultimately it has to perish. Leave aside, therefore, all forms of sceptical reasoning, and concentrate upon the Master Magician alone.

Necessary it is to study the lives of saints for the realization (of the state) of faith. Upon the attainment of true faith shall you be blessed by itself by the grace of Guru.

The Need and Marks of a True Guru

Qs. (Why is it) that people often seek pleasures in and of the world and not the fellowship of the righteous, and are less inclined towards righteous deeds? Is it because of past deeds (of previous lives)?

Ans. Proper and appropriate is your question. Disposed is man towards the world from time immemorial. From birth does man inherit the innate nature of attachment for those worldly experiences which delight the senses. Runs the mind towards those objects which attract its attention. (So) issue forth both wholesome and unwholesome deeds from every living being. Impossible, indeed, it is for the individual person to be disposed towards true fellowship and wholesome deeds till in the mind love of God and disposition towards true (spiritual) path is not allowed to come into being. Fortunate, indeed, is the individual in whom love of God remains constant, and the mind of such a man alone is disposed towards true fellowship. Come true thoughts to them who cultivate the fellowship of the righteous. Unspiritual beings, on the contrary, remain engaged in what may be called unrighteous deeds. Begins to come into being true faith in God the moment noble thoughts start to germinate in the mind. Find they their Guru who are filled with true faith. Impelled by faith, begin such men search for the spiritual teacher (*guru*) in holy places, in caves, in mountains, and so on. As the Divine will have it, they ultimately find their Guru. When initiated in the knowledge of Truth, they practice it and thereby attain the state

of spiritual perfection. Impossible it is to attain the sanctified state of a saint unless one engages in spiritual praxis. Although people engage themselves in various activities, it is not possible to attain perfection in any task or skill unless one is full of sincere devotion. It is the depth of interest which enables one to reach his or her goal.

Definite is the freedom from the ills of *karma* if established in God. Disposed will remain one towards the worldly experiences of delight till the desire for action continues to be. Disappear the tendencies for sensual delight when the mind remains absorbed in the ever existent or true Name, and thereby merges in the unconditioned *nirvana* by remaining oblivious of its surroundings. In such a state of enstatic ecstasy where shall mind go? Make it a habit, Lalji, of spending few minutes in the service of the Lord with a mind that is free from desires. The mind will be on the run unless, with right endeavour, the mind concentrates and recollects the true Name. Definitely comes spiritual success to them who seek refuge in a Guru. As no worldly skill can be learnt without a teacher, so no spiritual progress is possible without the guidance of a Guru. As a businessman you must know that a business deal or transaction is made only when one desires to enter into such a deal. What, therefore, is needed is that, before anything else, the desire of and for the Divine must be intense and firm, and the rest will follow.

Qs. How shall we, sir, reflect over the true path?

Ans. Reflect over such knowledge which may release men from bondage.

Qs. Is it possible, without the guidance of a teacher, to attain the liberative gnosis when in the past many sages have attained it without a teacher? So deficient is our age spiritually that difficult it is to find a true teacher. On the contrary, there is no dearth of false teachers. I would not like to be tempted by the doctrines of false teachers, as that would mean trouble, which need not be there.

Ans. Concern not yourself with the (problem of) saints. Be concerned with yourself. The saints are born self-realised. They are born as self-realised on account of their past spirituality. For the rest of populace spiritual praxis is necessary for the attainment (of spiritual) success. Guidance of a realised teacher is needed if the goal is to be reached. Need of a teacher is ordained by Nature itself. At every step of life, for every act of ours, even in matters of business, the guidance of an expert is felt. The attainment of the Transcendent is not a matter of child's play when no beginning even has been made. True, however, it is to say that there is no dearth of false teachers. Difficult, indeed, it may be to find a realised teacher but open remains the door for them who knock at it.

Qs. Have you, sir, ever encountered a perfect teacher on your journeys? Please tell us as to what constitutes the holiness of a saint. We shall definitely be helped by such a knowledge in recognising a true teacher. It is better to remain without a teacher than to become a prey of false teachers. What, sir, do you think about my views? The sacred scriptures do tell us about the marks of a teacher. As it is difficult to pass the test of the scriptural injunctions, so may you tell us about such a method which is contextual to our times.

Ans. Right is the suggestion that it is far better to remain without a teacher than to be a prey of false teachers. Whatever the situation may be, the search (for a right teacher) must continue. Some of the marks of a true teacher may be given below, so that none may be betwitched by the doctrines of false teachers. True teacher is one who fulfills the following criteria:

- (1) Identity between word and act is necessary
- (2) Mere scriptural knowledge is not of much help. What is needed is deep interior absorption and the capacity of reading the book of life.
- (3) (The true teacher) should be an icon of interior peace.
- (4) (One who) cares neither for fame nor suffers from greed (is a true teacher).
- (5) He mostly remains stationed at one place.
- (6) In no condition does he (true teacher) allow women to

approach him singly or in solitude, as he allows not himself to be associated with second sex.

- (7) (He is) always full of compassion.
- (8) (He) remains always in the state of detachment. (Having burnt every attachment in the fire of renunciation), (he) is affected by nothing.
- (9) No more under the influence of desires of nine sense-organs, (the realized) one remains established in the Great Sky (that is, in the Imperishable Word-Brahman). As the knower of the Self, such a person alone should be seen as the supreme Teacher, as he rests in the repose of transcendent peace by having overcome the three modes of Maya, and so accordingly stands as an ideal example for others. The grace of the Guru will begin to penetrate you by itself the moment there is the arising of true faith. With the fall of the grace of the Guru shall begin the practice of that spiritual praxis by the use of which you will begin to comprehend the nature of that Supreme Power which is different from the body, as it (the body) suffers from the deficiency of fear, thirst and hunger, heat and cold, birth and death, and so on. The Self shares not these deficiencies of the body. In each and every condition of life shall you be full of tranquility as and when you attain the condition of the own-being of the Self. What it amounts to saying is that you shall remain undisturbed the moment you engage in spiritual praxis, no matter through what existential situations you may have to pass. Your condition will be the same as is that of a pitcher without water if you engage not in spiritual practice.

Qs. Is it, sir, possible to have the revelation of the Self by some other means in which the guidance of a teacher is not needed?

Ans. No, it is not possible for people who, like you, are at the lowest spiritual rung of the ladder. Blessed are they with an appropriate knowledge of spiritual practice who receive the grace of Guru. Necessary it is to know whether the Guru is in possession of perfections, as explained above, before putting one's trust in him. Believe not in a teacher who is deficient both morally and

spiritually. Leave aside your sceptical reasoning if you find the teacher to be perfect. Go unto such a perfect teacher with a heart full of trust and faith. The compassionate grace of the Guru shall definitely reveal you that spiritual method by the practice of which you shall not only overcome the spiritual hurdles, but shall be blessed with supreme peace. True faith, indeed, is difficult to attain without the guidance of a true teacher, and so one remains constantly under the threat of loosing of what one has spiritually gained. They who receive proper instruction and method of practice from a true Guru are free from the modes of the world. Obtain nothing the worldly people except the burden of unbearable pain. What, therefore, is needed is to search for a teacher who is perfect and self-realized.

Qs. So far, sir, I have not taken any initiation from any Guru. Is it impossible to understand anything concerning spiritual matters without the guidance of a teacher? The complex words that you have made use of in your discourse are beyond my understanding. What I have so far grasped are the first few sentences in which we are informed: Freedom from desire shall evade you till you remain subject to delusion.

Ans. As rightly has been sung by the poet:
Caused is the destruction of that which is due to attachment,
As delusion and anger are its two cousins.
Caused is the destruction of the kingdom of the king by greed,
and so we learn how is reached the present condition.

Possible it is not, Lalji, to have both this world and the next apart from a teacher. As the path of truth is in itself difficult, and so comes into relief Being only on the strength of faith. Opened is the knot of bondage in a moment when one encounters the traveller of the path. Even after hearing or reading that *jiva* suffers from the bondage of countless births and deaths, the mind refuses to accept this truth. Deluded people remain in the grip of worldly delusion. Disclosed will be the meaning of the words to you only when you encounter a true teacher. At least make an attempt at adhering to some kind of a spiritual discipline.

Qs. What are the marks of recognition of the lovers of God?

Ans. Difficult it is to say as to what are the definite marks of recognition of the lovers of God. One of the marks of a devotee is that he always remains sad. Many so-called lovers of God are to be found in the world; but few are the lovers who offer themselves as sacrificial victims.

Qs. How is it possible to assert that the devotees of God are always serious and sad when they should be delighting in the exuberance of ecstasy?

Ans. True, indeed, it is that the mystics remain absorbed in the ecstatic bliss of the Self. As a psycho-physical being, however, he remains sad in relation to the world.

Qs. What are the marks of bliss of the Self?

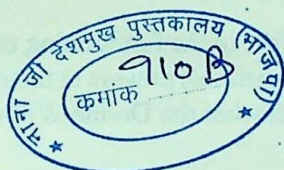
Ans. You, no doubt, ask too many questions. Attains the intellect total unity with the Self at that point of renunciation when it (the intellect), by dissociating itself from the sense of doership, stands aloof and passive. Thus the intellect obtains freedom from the pleasures of the body, or, in other words, sense of taste or delight no more affects it. It is how the bliss of the Self may be known.

Qs. What should one do if one finds not a true teacher, that is, the knower of the Self?

Ans. Reveals God, in one way or the other, himself to the seeker in whom the love of God burns intensely. The love (should be so intense) that (the seeker) thinks of nothing except union with God. There is no need to seek God in monastic establishments. As the Lord is omniscient (as well as) the indweller, he knows the needs of devotees. Somehow the devotee receives (mysteriously) the necessary divine blessings.

Qs. How should a saint be differentiated from a non-saint?

Ans. Free is the saint from anger and delusion, whereas a non-saint suffers from (all) the marks (which) are ill. The saint is no more subject to the demands of the body. Perfect is the saint in whose presence disappear (all forms of) doubt.



The Spiritual Stature of a Saint

Qs. Some sacred texts, particularly the ones dealing with Yoga, proclaim that a true yogi has the power of removing the afflictions both at the physical and mental levels. If the case be such, then why are you (referring to Gurudeva) not applying the yogic powers for the removal of your physical ailments?

Ans. Never do true yogis interfere in the functioning of Nature. Even though they have all the (spiritual) powers at their disposal, they are, however, content with what the Divine Will wants of them.

Qs. Often has it been seen that people are attracted towards saints in the same manner as magnet attracts (itself towards) iron. Thus has it been observed that men of different dispositions surrender at the feet of saints. What, sir, are the reasons for it?

Ans. What you say is quite right. The reason for it is this: (From the simplest creature) upto the king (all creatures) are in a state of discontentment, and so remain subject to the desires of the flesh. As each creature wants contentment, so (they) constantly search for this elusive (commodity) called contentment. The saints, (on the contrary), are full of contentment and this (contentment) always is reflected in their entire being. It is for this reason that people take refuge at the feet of saints with the hope of transforming their discontentment into contentment.

Qs. Can you tell as to how the perfect saints come to know everything?

Ans. The intellect of them (who have attained the perfect state) is subtle, and so with immediate perception they are (able) to penetrate every thought. They have the power of comprehending the thoughts (of others). Difficult, thus, it is not (for such an intellect) to know everything. Every creature is (blessed) with intelligence, and it is on account of intelligence that this body exists. The I-ness that is to be found in the intellect is called *maya*, or the power of delusion. Becomes the intellect like unto the Self, and thereby obtains freedom (from bondage) the moment it attains the state of that Light which illumines it.

God Realisation or the Path of Blessdness

Qs. Is there one or many path(-s) that lead to God?

Ans. The path of the Perfects is one, whereas for the (worldly) wise there are many. The Perfects utter that which they experience, whereas the (worldly) wise argue what the others have said.

Qs. How can, sir, God be realised?

Ans. To the extent (your) thoughts remain in the world, to that extent it is difficult (to realise God). Revealer of the Path shall come to you the moment you will forget the world by surrendering at the feet of the Lord.

Qs. It is true that man is uplifted spiritually when he is initiated by a Guru?

Ans. No! The task of the Guru is to show the path. Necessary it is to walk upon the path (shown by the Guru), and only then shall (spiritual) perfection be attained.

Qs. What means must one employ to obtain something, particularly the knowledge of brahman?

Ans. Necessary it is to be a perfect seeker of that which (one) wants to have. (The intensity of the search should be the same) which one finds in a traveller who travels fast with the aim of not having

to break the journey on the way due to the commencement of night. Analogously speaking, the spiritual sojourner, leaving aside sloth and desire for comfort, travels on with the intention that this fickle body may not perish before reaching the destination. You shall have a proper claim for the immortal knowledge of *brahman* only when your will is firmly oriented towards this end. Oneness with your own-being shall be realised, and the worldly hurdles shall no more oppress you.

Qs. In this (present) life I may not succeed, but I am hopeful that in the next life I shall be able to cross the ocean of Samsara?

Ans. Allow not your mind to be tampered by such a form of humility by virtue of which you may not begin your search today, but tomorrow, for a perfect Guru. Goes astray the mind which feeds itself on false hopes. Let not the noble thoughts, which have arisen within you, be allowed to perish. Otherwise you will encounter self-destruction. Spiritually shall you be uplifted if you find the right means for the realisation of renunciation.

Qs. Difficult, indeed, do I find it to orient myself towards the Divine. Why is it so, sir?

Ans. The worldly crocodiles (that is, the sense-objects) and the lack of faith allow you not to engage in spiritual praxis. Spiritual attentiveness and awareness is a necessary pre-condition for the attainment of Divine Love. Delay, therefore, no more!

Qs. Is it, sir, possible for you to tell us the way of attaining knowledge of the Self about which you have been discoursing?

Ans. There is, indeed, the way of the spirit, which can be known through contemplation.

Qs. What, sir, is implied when the term "contemplation" is made use of?

Ans. Spiritual contemplation is that process of praxis which termi-

nates in dissociation, non-objective experience, concentrated meditation, and thereby the essential nature of the Self is revealed, and by knowing which total unity with the witnessing Self is realised. Although through scriptural study the disposition of thoughts may be put on a right track, the state, however, disappears if the impure tendencies are allowed to a rise. Necessary, therefore, it is to practice contemplation for the removal of impure residues. Apart from contemplation, there is no other way.

Qs. Many saints, including Buleh Shah, have, sir, said: Be not owned by anyone! What does this saying imply or mean?

Ans. This saying denotes that, by dissociating from the phenomenal becoming, remain close to your essential nature by firmly believing in what you essentially are.

Qs. How shall we know, sir, that we are established in our own essential nature?

Ans. Deprived shall you be of the knowledge of the Self, that is, of your own essential nature, unless you go beyond the subtle and gross forms of physical and worldly pleasures. Subservient shall you be to the experiences of profit and loss, pain and pleasure, association and dissociation unless you know not the essential nature of Truth.

Qs. How long or what period of time, sir, shall it take to attain the knowledge of the Self?

Ans. A mind that is fully concentrated shall attain the divine state of the Self within a period of week or fortnight. What, however, is needed is right endeavour!

Qs. Which is the path that may be said to be spiritually uplifting for man?

Ans. As this body is the main instrument of action, so accordingly, at a given point of time, become manifest various actions (through

the body). Keeps the individual being the wheel of action in motion by allowing itself to be subservient to the experiences caused by action (through the body), and thereby attaching itself to the body. Possible it is not for (such an) individual to be content with itself. Necessary, for the removal of discontentment, it is to renounce all such activities which cause destruction of the avenues of well-being of the body. Noble and right is the endeavour which rises when the intellect is purified by right deeds, and thereby all activities of life are carried out in accordance with the will of God.

Attains the intellect sufficient spiritual strength through the practice of such virtues as simplicity, service, fellowship of the righteous and meditative recollection. When spiritually strong, the intellect renounces (all such) deeds which are purposeless. Suffers the intellect from delusion if the above (spiritual) means are absent. Through right reflection comes one to know the truth about everything. True and noble is the way in which one, as a true believer, sees both bodily pain and ease in the context of Divine Will.

Qs. How shall man be redeemed?

Ans. Man shall, within a short period of life, be god-like if he keeps the following three norms in mind: (i) Belief in, and reflection upon, the Divine; (ii) awareness of death, and (iii) selfless service.

A God-Orineted Life

Qs. Proclaim you (in your discourses) that freedom from three forms of affliction is obtained if the Name of the Lord is (meditatively) recollected. (If so), then why this bodily illness?

Ans. Physical infirmities come and go, dearly beloved. (The physical deficiencies) are dependent upon the condition of the mind. Pain or ailment is an external manifestation of the body, whereas transcended is the dialectic of pain and non-pain in the condition of Self-knowledge. Suffer the worldly people both from mental and physical pain, which come to be either due to separation or union. As the sense of individuality (of worldly people) is strong, so no profit or mental peace results merely by saying that it is the will of God. Suffers he no more the limitations of thought who, with interior determination, understands the dialectic of success and failure, pain and pleasure, and all the dualities as forms of Divine Will. It is the nature of the intellect to depend on externals. What one should rather do is to reflect inwardly. Limitations, in one way or the other, will continue to be to the extent this prison-house (that is, the body) exists. Small happenings must not be allowed to disturb one's stability. Suffers the individual from three forms of pain: invisible pain, mental pain and environmental pain. He alone should be seen to be wise who understands this entire drama in terms of Divine Will and remains, no matter what the state or condition may be, ever thankful unto his Lord.

Qs. What, sir, are the reasons or causes for the spiritual stagnation of my life?

Ans. You will, dearly beloved, have to follow the Path of Truth with a determined mind, and it (the life of spirit) is not a plaything for babes. It is a life in which death has to be accepted in the midst of living. How is it possible to obtain success when you fail even to perform the duties which have been given unto you? Remember this *mantra*: Accept everything, with gladness, as a gift of Divine Will.

Qs. We have, sir, been discussing matters of serious nature. Would not it be possible, in a lighter vein, to throw some light as to whether I shall be blessed with some measure of spiritual success?

Ans. Tease not unnecessarily your life. There is no need to think too seriously or to fall in the whirlpool of abstractions. Your problem shall be solved if you keep in mind the following three items:

- (a) Know it that God alone is the cause of this entire creation.
- (b) Be always aware, without any scepticism, that you are within the Law of God and that whatever happens is due to the Divine Will.
- (c) Regulate and discipline your life in accordance with the programme that was given at Gujran. (With such a spiritual discipline) shall the death of the mother of ego be caused. Upon its destruction you have neither to do anything nor get things done (by others).

Qs. Although the Path you have shown is easy, yet it will demand such spiritual practices which are difficult to undertake. Each step seems to be wrought with the danger of spiritual fall. Is it possible to receive some more help (so that the path may be much more easy than what it is)?

Ans. With ease and comfort the Path can be travelled provided the seeker, having a perfect Teacher, puts entire trust in him as well as seeks Truth truly and perfectly. Teacher shall take care of every spiritual matter by himself.

Qs. Men of righteousness, sir, always maintain that every event

must be seen in the light of Divine Will. Why should we be at all commanded with such injunctions as to avoid evil by doing good when every event, whether good or bad, is said to be dependent upon Divine Will? When God is to be all-in-all, then who are we or what significance do we have? Difficult it is to understand the saying of the saints - "Walk in accordance with the Divine Will-" if we are seen to be the doers of deeds.

Ans. The question you have put forward has three aspects: (i) The initial state of people is such that they suffer from the lack of faith in God, and so they are accordingly asked to do deeds which are wholesome and avoid deeds which are unwholesome. They who follow the advice are able to understand the spiritual states or conditions ahead by repeatedly practising values which are moral. The intellect attains both purity and sharpness. The intellect, at this stage, suffers, however, from a deficiency due its association with ego, and thereby thinks of itself as the highest and the best. Impelled by ego, it thinks of itself as the doer of such and such a deed. The consequences are that the individual person remains tied to the bondage of births and deaths, and thereby reaches not the state of a claimant. Even after enduring the burden of bondage, the individual is unable to free itself from bondage. The question before us now is as to how such an individual would attain the condition of detachment and passivity, which, in other words, denotes as to how freedom from the pain of endless cycles of births and deaths could be had! The men of wisdom, in this context, maintain that (ii) at the second spiritual level freedom from the fruits of deeds could be realised if all the good deeds are surrendered unto God. Necessary it is for the intellect to be humble and surrendering for the attainment of detachment and passivity, for the liberation from the endless cycle of becoming. The third perspective of your question consists in (iii) seeing, with an intellect that is humble, action and non-action, event and non-event in terms of Divine Will. With such an attitude and disposition should one reflect and think about God alone. As and when the intellect frees itself from the doership of ego, it remains absorbed in the imperishable and indivisible interior Word. Free from the dialectic of deed and its

fruit, the (intellect) penetrates the essential nature or own-being of Truth. This spiritual condition, indeed, is spoken of as that of salvific non-dual peace.

Wanders the intellect in the world of phenomenal as well as microcosmic becoming when it, because of its association with ego as a doer, falls prey to innumerable desires. The destruction of this thick darkness, caused by the ego as a doer, can be accomplished only when one surrenders unto the Divine Will by looking at God as the sole doer. Blessed shall he be who reflects with such an attitude of mind. It is what is called *bhakti* or devotional love of God. Experiences the intellect the flavour of bliss of the essential nature of the Self when it attains spiritual maturity and total quietitude. The best way of obtaining freedom from the bondage of *karma* is to know God as the sole doer. The intellect, at the empirical level, usually thinks of itself, due to its association with ego, as the doer, and thereby experiences the dialectic of pain and pleasure. (This continuous cycle of pain and pleasure) is called the wheel of the world, that is, of phenomenal becoming. Nature, however, enacts its play through its three modes, and thereby the individual is made to suffer from the noose of individuality. Although the Lord is in-itself passive, yet the only way for the individual to obtain freedom from bondage is to surrender one's deeds unto Him.

Qs. Why should man be held responsible for good or bad deeds when it is maintained that not even a leaf moves without God's will?

Ans. What you say has no substance for the simple reason that one remains *not* when God is seen to be the doer. In other words, it means that freedom from the bondage of *karma* comes to be when, upon renouncing the sense of doership, God alone is seen to be the doer. Fruits of the deeds shall have to be reaped to the extent the sense of doership continues to be.

Qs. Any undertaking, if left midway, will end in failure. Suffer I from continuous doubt that a little carelessness may spoil both the goal and the undertaking. "Why should we worry"?

I have heard many people saying so who not only are careless, but take the pretext of Divine will in asserting that God will set things right. May you kindly clarify as to whether such an assertion is right or not?

Ans. The individual who thinks of himself as the doer of deed remains tied to the peg of ego, which is characterised by the experience of pain and pleasure. There are some who are careless about the Divine Will. They, however, accomplish what has to be accomplished due to the intervention of Divine Grace. Even if persons may not reach the goal, they, however, undergo neither pain nor unease. As they (remain) same externally and internally, it is but a matter of faith.

Qs. Usually the saints assert that whatever God does, he does it for our good. Suffer they no more who are content with what God does for them. How do you, sir, view such an assertion?

Ans. (The assertion of the saints) is right and true. (In support of the above assertion) an event shall be described. Once upon a time there lived a sufi saint who was known as Awalia Shahdawala. Nearby his residence flowed the river Chinab. Close to it existed a hamlet on a hillock. Once it so happened that, due to heavy rain, the river was flooded with rainy water. The flood waters were so high that it began to flow beneath the village and caused heavy erosion of land. On seeing the dangerous situation, the villagers approached the sufi saint for his intervention. The village headman described, in all detail, the precarious condition of the village. The saint unexpectedly stood up and went near the village to find out as to what the situation was. All of a sudden he uttered: "It is the will of the Master that the village be submerged, and the will of the Lord has to be fulfilled. Firmly do I believe that Lord desires that which is good for us." In an ecstatic mood the saint began to throw shovels of clay into the river with the intention that the embankment may not break, and thereby the village may not submerge in the flood waters. It is being said that the clay which the saint threw fell at a distance of two yards from the river. As a consequence the river changed its course and began to flow in the direction where the saint had

thrown clay - and thus the village was saved from the flood waters. Manifests the Lord his divine and wonderful powers through such people who desire nothing. (Such people) remain happy and content with the intention of the Lord.

Right Method of Living

Qs. How should one, sir, lead life in the world?

Ans. Make your life that of duties and not of demands.

Qs. What, sir, is the life of duties?

Ans. Given to greed is the life which, centered upon the body and bodily pleasures, seeks or desires to taste the flavour of the flesh. Opposite to greed is the life of duties. It is a life which seeks not its own good, but sacrifices its comforts for the amelioration of others. What it amounts to saying is that the man of duties, by surrendering each deed unto Divine Will, thinks of himself as a mere instrument concerning the activities of life, and so accordingly remains always oriented towards God.

Qs. Would it be possible to explain, in few words, the content of interior or spiritual life?

Ans. As and when the body engages itself in action, associate not yourself with it, as it is spoken of as the state of passivity or non-action. Quietitude is the essence of interior life. The root of the world and of its objective experiences is located in doership. The wise ones engage in action when they free themselves from the sense of doership, whereas the ignorant ones, on the contrary, act by associating themselves with the agency of doership. It is what distinguishes a wise man from the ignorant one. Whatever action or deed a man of wisdom performs, he performs it in total detachment and with a sense of divine duty. The worldly person, on the other hand, acts with selfish greed.

Qs. There comes a time in life when one loses hope and comes to the end of rope. What should, sir, such a person do when despair surrounds him on all sides? --

Ans. One should conduct life, so say the saints, in such a manner as one would visit a garden or a park, that is, the only goal the visitor has is to visit the garden. He remains totally detached from the things or objects which he may find in the garden. It is how one should conduct the affairs of life in the world. Also from the lives of saints we learn the way we should live in the world. Walk in accordance with what the saints say.

Qs. How do you view, Maharaj ji, (the above question)? May you accordingly express your views!

Ans. The right way for man is to think that God is both the doer as well as the cause, and so one must conduct, like a servant, the affairs of life within the circle of Divine injunctions. Therefore, the programme of life in the world must be such which will facilitate the passage of life.

Qs. May you, Maharaj ji, explain much more explicitly as to how the programme of life should be made?

Ans. The problem (that is thrown up by the question) is, indeed, significant. Listen with attention about the programme of life (in the world). The programme of life should be such which would protect it (from evil), and accordingly, by giving up unnecessary wants, should one lead a life of contentment. Perchance due to one's destiny one may inherit or obtain abundance of wealth, it must be spent on wholesome activities and may also be distributed among the destitutes, helpless and the orphans. With great endeavour must such a programme be set, and with a determined will must one adhere to it. It is not a matter of words; rather should one conduct oneself in accordance with the programme that has been set. *Maya*, as a great teacher, always tends to awaken people from slumber, but few fortunate alone are there who are able to understand the secret. Come to the senses such people when they have a fall due to their unrighteous deeds.

Mostly people remain forgetful, and so lead a fallen life.

Qs. How can, Maharaj Ji, the real nature of Maya be correctly understood?

Ans. Every aspect of *maya* is known only on knowing God. The need, therefore, is to know God first, and by the grace of the Master the essential nature of *maya* shall be known by itself. There remains no need to know anything when God is known. They who try to know *maya* (instead of God) engage in such activities which give rise to weapons like atom-bomb, which is the real nature of destruction and conflict. They who desire peace must seek God; otherwise difficult it is to obtain freedom from the grip of *maya*.

Qs. The condition of the world, Maharaj Ji, is too bad. Is there no way of finding a solution to this problem?

Ans. Instead of thinking of things which are outside of you, think of yourself. Others can be helped only if you first help yourself. You will, indeed, be in a position to quench the thirst of others only when you are able to quench your own thirst.

Qs. The householders, Maharaj Ji, have at times to make use of unfair means in their transactions or dealings. Should such a behaviour be abandoned?

Ans. They who are desirous of a wholesome life in the world must follow the righteous injunction. All that one needs not must be spent in the service of those who are in need. You shall yourself experience that if you extend help to hundred people, there will be thousands of people who will speak good of you. You will reach the height of goodness. It is the principle as well as the station of selfless life which the saints speak of as the realisation of the bliss of oneness.

It is a well-known principle that life need not be falsified. All the vexatious problems will find their solution provided wholesome life is lead. Rich people must always marry their daughters in

families which are poor with the intention of making both social and economic equality a reality. If a son has to be married, he must be married with a girl who is from a poor family. In this manner social evils can be overcome. If this prescription is followed, it will radically change society, and there is, therefore, no need for the householder to remain in any kind of tension.

Once of upon a time the leading landlord of Rawalpindi (which is now in Pakistan), namely, Sardar Sujan Singh, was going to Kuri alongwith his uncle on some business errand. They sat under the shade of a tree outside the village, as they were tired and full of fatigue. While relaxing under the tree, they began to talk over the family matters, particularly about the daughter who was growing up. Meanwhile, a young and handsome-looking man passed by alongwith his ponies. Because of his poverty, he rented out his ponies by carrying other people's things. On seeing the boy, immediately said Sardarji: how good it would be if we get such a nice looking lad for our daughter! He called the boy and asked about his address. The Sardarji went straight to boy's home, and offered his daughter for the boy he had seen. The boy's father, knowing his status, insisted that he was poor and could in no way be socially and economically compared to him. Sardarji, however, helped the father of the poor boy by providing the necessary financial help, and thereby raising him socially and economically. By marrying the daughter to the boy, (he, that is, Sardarji) gave him a suitable job. If the poor are helped in this manner, society as a whole shall benefit (from such acts).

Qs. In your vani, Mahraj Ji, you proclaim that so much profit should one earn which would serve the purpose of righteous living. Can you, sir, throw some more light on this question?

Ans. When it is said that little profit should be earned on things which one sells, what is meant is that one should put oneself in the place of a consumer to whom things have to be sold. Fix the amount of profit only as a consumer or buyer and not as a seller. You shall thereby be able in fixing right price on things which are going to be sold. You will not discriminate between one consumer and the other, as there will be one price for all, and so whether one be a

child, a grown up person, a young man, rich man, poor man, government official or servant, or king—all of them will be treated identically. In so far as interest on loan is concerned, it is necessary to charge little interest, as no business transaction without it is possible. There is the danger of losing the entire capital if interest is not charged. In so far as this business is concerned, it is not good in itself, nor the fruits of it. If, due to certain circumstances, one is compelled to engage in this kind of business, then the rate of interest must be kept to the minimum, as the wealth earned through such business lasts not for long.

Qs. Will you, sir, give such a prescription which will enable one to lead a life of simplicity?

Ans. Possible it is to be simple in one's living provided one is ready to spend less than what one earns. The elders have said that the life of simplicity can be lived provided one gives one-tenth of income to charity, one-tenth to government in the form of taxes, and whatever remains that should be spent on oneself.

Qs. How should one, sir, conduct one's daily life in order that there may be inward progress?

Ans. The purpose of this life is well served if one surrenders unto God till the time one breathes his last. Love God alone, work for Him alone, and live for Him alone. There is nothing in the world (which is profitable) except letting the intellect to remain absorbed in the recollection of God. Whenever you eat food, eat it not for the taste of the tongue, but for the health of the body. Eat that food which digests soon and is nourishing. Wear clothes only for protection against heat and cold. Change not your physical features, but let them be as they are, or as they have been made by the Almighty. Clothes will not improve the physical structure of the body. Spend not much on clothes. Hesitate not in being simple or of making use of clothes which are of ordinary texture. (In being simple) you will not only learn how to live on less income, but much more comprehensive and realistic shall your devotional (life) be. Live your life in accordance with your necessary needs, and so engage not in the task of amassing

wealth. Inner agitations shall cease to be if you cultivate the fellowship of the righteousness and remain engaged in the remembrance of the Lord. Blessed shall you be with joy and with the attainment of real peace if you cultivate the (above) virtues. Remains thirst unquenched in the world, and so (rightly is it called) the place of suffering. It is by remembering the Lord that you will cross (the ocean of worldly miseries). The entire night, dearly beloved, is given to you for remembering the Lord, but (instead being awake to the Lord) you sleep the slumber of forgetfulness. Remain awake, and what better time of solitude shall you have for spiritual praxis than night? There is still time, and you shall be blessed (with divine grace) if you begin the spiritual practice of remembrance.

Qs. The world is changing at such a speed, sir, that the people of evil disposition alone are seen everywhere. How should a seeker conduct himself in the midst of such people when the sole concern of the seeker is to attain the knowledge of Reality, and so accordingly his path differs radically from the worldly people? It has, however, been observed that, according to the law of Nature, each creature finds its association in accordance with its nature or disposition. Whatever be the case, it is a fact that in today's world one has to sit, discourse and make transactions with people who either are passionate and energetic or with people who are slothful and lazy. How should (the seeker), sir, live and abide in such a situation?

Ans. You have, Lalji, asked a very serious question, and accordingly a simple solution or method is being offered. The burden of the problem shall be less if the solution is applied correctly. What you should do is to conduct your transactions with such people (who are worldly) at the external level, that is, never be intimate with such people at the spiritual or interior level. This is the best way or method (of conducting oneself in situations like this). In all your transactions, never enter in unnecessary discourse. Far better would it be to remain silent. The attitude of silence shall definitely keep away the unwanted people, as in them the fear of silence will shut the doors of approach. Along with (inward) silence continue your (own prescribed) spiritual practice. A day

will come when uplifted you will be spiritually. People around you will bow before you and will give the recognition that is yours.

(The Nature of the) body and the path of deliverance from the World

Qs. How shall freedom from the bodily prison be obtained?

Ans. Obtains the individual existent freedom from the limitations of the body through selfless deeds. It is the essence (of the salvific message) of the *Gita*. Every other saint and prophet too has preached this doctrine (of selflessness). Remains the individual being in the grip of action to the extent (he is subject) to cravings. Selfless actions, indeed, free the individual from the cravings of the body in the same manner as is found in the lives of saints.

Qs. Is it possible to say that the sun and the rivers, who serve selflessly, are rightful claimants of ultimate liberation?

Ans. Know it for certain that the nature of the body (microcosm) and of the cosmos (macrocosm) is identical. As the body is the aggregate of five elements, so is this external (world). It is on account of will power that mental (states) become manifest. (With the manifestation of mental states) come into being the five (gross) elements. The five elements will continue to manifest themselves as the phenomenal categories until the power of will attains not the final state of release. As the five elements are the imagined determinations of will power, so their disappearance is dependent upon the withdrawal of will power. Both the cosmos and the body have identical rise and fall. As the rise and fall of

cosmos is unfathomable, it is but (natural) to endeavour for the knowledge of Being, which brings blessings upon the cosmos. All the powers (whether phenomenal or non-phenomenal) disappear upon the attainment of the knowledge of the Self. In equal terms this law is applicable both to creatures and natural powers.

Qs. Why, sir, does the body suffer from lacks and deficiencies, and how can they be overcome?

Ans. The first and foremost deficiency the body suffers from is its changing nature, that is, from moment to moment it undergoes change. What it (the body) experiences as pleasurable at one moment turns out to be painful at the other moment. The second lack of the body is characterised by need. Never are the thirst of needs (of the body) quenched, as it always is oppressed by the need of hunger, thirst, heat and cold, pain and pleasure, attachment and envy, lust and jealousy, etc. The body, therefore, remains always in the state of helplessness, despair and pain. The situation is so pitiable that one knows not what to do. Rightly, therefore, have the saints said: Be not subject to the designs of the body. Act contrary to what the mind says. Extract the mind skilfully from experiences which are pleasant and delightful. Make no use of force and violence. Enable your mind to grasp the fact that how men of truth succeeded in attaining the peaceful mode of existence by telling it (the mind) to determine the course of life in accordance with the footprints which (the saints) have left. Definitely shall you, oh mind, be blessed if you follow the lives of saints. For the attainment of comfort people have undergone untold suffering, yet they have departed from the world as creatures of despair. Empty they came, empty they left. So learn, oh mind, from the lives of people, and follow the way which the saints have shown. Attempt in this very life at transcending the delights of the body. Oppressed are they not by the bodily pain who are firm of will. A person of firm will knows that God does everything for us, and so accordingly he sees joy in what the ordinary people term as pain. Wonderful play is being played for such a person by the Supreme Reality on account of his righteous thoughts and surrendering will.

Qs. What means or methods shall we adopt for the purpose of crossing the phenomenal ocean of conditioned life?

Ans. There is no need to withdraw from this external world. What is, first and foremost, needed is to renounce the world of this body, which is full of impure filth. How shall it profit to withdraw from the world when the filth of the body is still there? The link with the external world shall cease to be only when the relating link is broken. It is in and through the body that association with the world is formed or caused. Freedom from the body denotes freedom from the world. The need, therefore, is to be dissociated from the body, which in itself and by itself determines the withdrawal from the external world. In order to obtain freedom from the body, what is necessary is to renounce all those modes of comfort and pleasure for which man struggles continuously. For this purpose the cultivation of such virtues as, for example, simplicity, charity, truthfulness, fellowship of the righteous and true recollection is necessary. As you advance in the practice of these virtues, you will experience closeness to God, and thereby you shall be able to understand the momentary nature of all worldly comforts; and so accordingly you will be seized by the will of the spirit of renunciation for the things of the world, which, in other words, means to remain absorbed in the divine love of God by transcending the modes of the world.

Qs. What, sir, is the significance of the term *vaitarani*?

Ans. In the *Mahabharata* we come across a situation in which Yudhishtira, during the period of his exile, was asked such a question by a demon spirit. Yudhishtira answered by saying that *vaitarani* denotes desires or craving. The crossing of *Vaitarani* means to overcome craving.

Qs. How is it possible to run the affairs of the world if everyone will seek liberation?

Ans. The desire for liberation is not everyone's cup of tea nor does everybody feel the need of it. Only few exceptional souls seek it, few endeavour for it, and few attain it. The rest is a mere play or

show. The world, indeed, is janus-faced: people saying something and thinking something else. Far away is one from the door of liberation in so far as one remains subject to the cravings of senses. Liberation or freedom denotes, in fact, the state of total desirelessness. Few fortunate alone can attain it. They who are slothful waste their time in unnecessary arguments, and so they attain nothing. The right way of living denotes the path of freedom. Rest is ignorance.

Qs. Is it possible to obtain liberation if one remembers God at the time of death? Once upon a time, so we are told, a saintly person visited the home of someone. He was well-received and looked after. The saint is said to have advised his host that he should name his son as Narayana. In accordance with the advice of the saint, he named his son as Narayana. As the time of death began to approach, he called for his son: Narayana. As he passed away, the messengers of death came to take his soul. On the other hand, the Lord God sent his messengers too. The messengers of Death complained to their master by saying that the soul of the person was taken away by the messengers of Lord God. The Lord of Death said: he has attained liberation, as he has uttered the name of Lord Narayana at the time of his death. How shall this story be interpreted?

Ans. Such stories have no significance, as they are folkloric in nature and mythological in content. Liberation signifies union with the essential nature of Reality, or what is commonly called God. The worldly people like such stories, words or discourses which are attractive. Only few know what Reality is. Although deliverance from bondage comes to be by meditating the Name of the Lord, yet the Name cannot be uttered unless one has the interior satisfaction. Inward satisfaction is not a realisable goal unless one thinks rightly. Ignorant, indeed, are they who assert that liberation can be realised who utter the Name of the Lord at the time of death. It is true that the future course of life will be good by uttering the Name of God, but in so far as freedom from bondage is concerned, it can come only when the Self is revealed. Think of the world to be in the state of ignorance till one has the

revelation of the Self. For this purpose leave aside all that is unnecessary and turn the intellect towards the Self. Good shall come to you by following this path.

Qs. Everything good that we may have done in life will turn to waste if, perchance, at the last moment of life the mind is influenced by such tendencies which are either passionate or slothful in nature. What must be done in such a situation?

Ans. Dependent is your future birth upon the kind of dispositions your body entertains at the time of death. In so far as your good deeds are concerned, they shall not be wasted. Whatever the form or nature of your birth may be, you shall be rewarded of your good deeds. Let us illustrate the point. They who die with a righteous disposition but have committed heinous crimes throughout their life are born in the lowest state of existence where they continue their violent propensities. If a person, on the other hand, dies with a disposition of passion but has been good in terms of deeds throughout his life (such a person) takes birth as an animal or bird where he is able to taste the fruits of his past good deeds. There are birds and animals who, possessing the qualities of goodness, prove to be as good as men of righteousness. Born are they as immobile entities who die with a disposition which is degrading. As immobile entities, they either help or harm people according to their respective natures. The essence of all this is that with whatever disposition people may die and whatever their future birth may be in accordance with their disposition, none escapes fruits of the deeds done in previous existence. Without the knowledge of Reality the fruits of *karma* cannot be destroyed.

Qs. What important points must be kept in mind for spiritual upliftment?

Ans. (The most important points that need to be considered for spiritual development are the following): The psychic field needs to be softened by the showers of dispassion; the seasons (dispositions) need to be pleasant; the farmer must possess the qualities of a teacher; the seed needs to be of high quality—only

then is it possible to cross the ocean of life through spiritual praxis.

Qs. What is the nature of tri-functional maya?

Ans. Every deed (as cause) terminates in an effect (fruit). When a deed is done, it gives rise to what may be called personal identity, and expresses itself in terms: "I have done it." It is improper, nay, criminal, (from the spiritual viewpoint), to speak in such terms. Always manifest the waves of deeds and cravings, which mutually give rise to each other, upon the screen of the mind. It is what is known as delusion (*maya*). The various deeds are done by the individual with the intention of reaping the fruit, and accordingly undergoes the experiences of pain and pleasure, joy and sadness, attachment and delusion. The only way of coming out from this cesspool is to negate the personal identity, or, in other words, it is the absence of ego which frees one from the circuit of conditioned becoming. Orient the sense of doership towards Truth. The state of passivity remains unrealised unless the disposition of Truth is not strengthened. The individual being will remain bound to the bondage of *karma* while moving from one birth to another. Release (from bondage) shall be realised only when one begins the process of righteous deeds.

Delusion, Attachment and Love

Qs. What, sir, differentiates love from delusion?

Ans. The condition of love is that in which the intellect, by remaining absorbed in Divine recollection, forgets itself, and so the entire melieu around the devotee is charged by the ecstasy (of love). As this condition is beyond the dyad of union and disunion, right and duty, joy and sorrow, there is no suffering of any kind to be found (in this state). Delusion, on the other hand, is that form of attachment which keeps (the individual) tied to the body as well as to the world. (It is a condition) in which the fear of dissociation (from the loved) and association (with the unwanted) is predominant. Remain hidden the selfish (dispositions) even when the perspective may be determined by the vision of duty.

Qs. How, sir, must one love God?

Ans. The love of God comes to be only when one firmly believes in, and thereby orients the will towards, God. Grow the seeds of divine love upon the soil of heart when one engages in such spiritual practices as, for example, self-study, reflection, study of the lives of saints, daily reflection over the way the saints have led their lives, and by participating in the fellowship of saints.

Qs. What is the method by the use of which the propensity of attachment may be destroyed?

Ans. The individual being suffers from the burden of attachment of the body. Thus the attachment of bodily-related entities increases. All creatures desire to derive easeful (experiences) from each other. To the extent (propensities for various) desires increases, to that extent takes place the expansion of attachment for the world. For the destruction of attachments are religious practices and principles intended. Neither the love nor the glory of God will penetrate the heart unless the (disposition) for the body is not destroyed. The nature of attachment will be changed (into that of detachment) at the point where God's love penetrates the heart.

Contrary to each other are the doctrines of hedonism and of spirituality. Real peace is experienced (by the individual) to the extent he renounces the attachment (for the world). (As we are nothing), it is Lord who alone must be recognised as the sole causal agent. Comes to an end self-significance when the Lord is seen as the sole causal agent. (As a consequence of this recognition) there shall occur the discovery of inward joy. (Unfortunately) the individual experiences (spiritual) bondage from birth to birth. Blessed, indeed, are they who get awakened (from spiritual torpor) who come in contact with men of insight.

Instead of being subservient to the body, the individual must lord over it by renouncing its attachment. (They who) reflect over, and repeat, the Name of the Lord experience (total) freedom from the ecstasy of the body.

Deprived are they of peace who give in to the dispositions of the mind.

As life is transient, there (exists) neither give nor take.

Five moral defects of lust, anger, delusion, greed and attachment destroy the individual in the same manner as is wood by termite. (A morally deficient person) is neither satisfied by the sensual delights nor is he able to free himself from the noose of attachment. (As a result of attachment) suffers the individual from inner unrest. (Release from bondage is not possible for them who think in terms of): "I am a holy person, a mendicant, or a renunciate." The best treatment (for this illness) is humility. No

better treatment is there for this illness than the following: Thy will (Lord) be done - This alone is true.

Qs. The world that appears to our senses attracts people towards itself, and so rises attachment (for the worldly things). In such a situation the destruction of mental propensities is not possible. To the extent (there is expansion) of attachment, to that extent appears world to be delightful. (So delightful are the pleasures of the world) that no individual wants to forget them even for a moment. Why?

Ans. There are people who shave their heads, or remain naked, or stand in water, or remain near burning fire, or allow their hair grow, or adopt exhibitionistic methods. The purpose of such acts is (basically) to overcome the propensity of attachment. (Such so-called religious) people suffer from much more attachment than is to be found among the worldly ones. Suffer they from the bewitching influence of *maya* who are worshipped as enlightened ones. The one who is born in the world is attracted by it. Endeavour they for freedom from the bondage of attachment who, having understood the world, try to understand its (of the world) nature, and seek to know the First Cause behind the phenomena. Difficult, indeed, it is to destroy attachment when the intellect is unfree. So gripped is (every) person by the disposition of attachment that each (person) is engaged in expanding its influence more and more. (Thus) every individual suffers from the sickness of attachment. It is attachment which (facilitates) the manifestation of (various forms of) attachment. Fortunate is the individual who, having understood the nature of illness, seeks its treatment. As freedom from *maya*-induced restlessness is needed, it can be had by seeking the guidance of the one who is (spiritually) enlightened. The entire life-span must be spent in asking the question: How to obtain freedom from unrest? Ask (for the solution) from them who have destroyed the bewitching force of *maya*.

Spiritual seriousness and righteous thoughts attains the intellect when it seeks no more the delights of the world, when it understands the true nature of ease, when it accepts the changing

nature of the body, and understands that the body exists because of a substratum. Changes the mind its course (for the better) when it understands depth. None learns the entire lesson (of life) in a day. Thus should one cultivate the habit of regularly participating in the fellowship of the righteous. Wait no more, as the night is coming closer. Seek the fellowship of saints, and walk always in this (saintly) direction.

Qs. What are the marks by which love can be known?

Ans. Of great value is your question. When the transient nature of the body and of the world is realized by the intellect, then the truth of momentariness is known. With (such an understanding) comes into being love divine, and thereby is attained the (state) of perfection.

Qs. In what way may the divine love of God be realized?

Ans. Arises love of God (at that moment) when the world, like time, is seen to be moving towards non-existence. Move away from the glitter of the world and turn inward. The love of God will arise by itself the moment inwardness deepens.

Qs. Kindly explain the essential nature of Divine Love?

Ans. The (ultimate) goal is not an easy one. Few reach it. Attained is the Divine love when the self is annihilated (in the fire of) own-being.

Qs. What you said concerning the Divine love is true. It is, no doubt, the ultimate condition of the soul. The question, however, is: What are the states through which one has to pass in order to reach this goal?

Ans. Love Divine is characterised by three states, namely:

1. Speculative love
2. certain or definite love
3. perfect or complete love.

Speculative love arises when one participates in the fellowship of saints, or hears about the love divine from saints, or studies (about it) in the scriptures.

Comes into being that love of God, which is certain, when one practices the spiritual methods which the saints have disclosed. The individual (of this category) is certain of what he has heard about God's love, and so is convinced of his (spiritual) path. (This love) makes him certain of the existence of God. In this condition (the soul) firmly believes in Divine love.

In the final state (of love) the individual practices spiritual exercises more perfectly. (As a result of such practices) he reaches the ultimate goal of Divine love. Upon the attainment of Divine love the individual annihilates himself in the supreme state of the Lord. It is the real state of perfect love.

Subliminal Impressions and Self-Nature

Qs. Do the existents in various forms of (embodied existence), like that of birds, animals, etc., simply reap the fruit of their (previous deeds) or also engage in (fresh) deeds?

Ans. Whatever the form of existence may be, the individual (being) always remains engaged in action.

Qs. Do we, sir, act in accordance with our own will or do the impressions of our past lives determine the path (of life) that is either auspicious or inauspicious?

Ans. The present character, indeed, of a being is determined by (the past) impressions. The course of life, however, can be changed. It is few alone who make (the proper) use of God-given intellect. The individual can (if he so desires) renounce the evil (way) by adhering to the good. (There are times when an individual) commits evil deeds while doing good as well. The need, therefore, is to adhere, with a resolute and firm mind, to that which is noble (morally). Higher he goes up spiritually who adheres, with a resolute heart, to the path of righteousness. Disposed towards goodness are they who cultivate the fellowship of saints. Impure is the intelligence of them who associate themselves with the evil ones. Reaps one that which one cultivates (is an old saying). For this reason alone emphasis upon the cultivation of the good is laid. The phenomenal world reflects but the darkness of ignorance. It is on account of ignorance that both the body and the

world are viewed as real. It is few blessed souls who move away from darkness by turning towards the true and real when intelligence gains the power of discrimination. Remain not silent in the midst of righteous fellowship; rather continue your (spiritual) reflection. (As a consequence of this reflection) intelligence shall be freed from the impact of delusion.

Qs. May you kindly explain as to what is the meaning of self-exertion and of what one has inherited!

Ans. Become the exertions of today your lot tomorrow when they change themselves into residual impressions. As the food eaten today proves helpful tomorrow by providing the necessary strength to the body, in likemanner do the impressions of past lives determine the character of the individual (in the present) according to which the deeds are done. There are some more aspects (of life) to be known, which may either mar or improve one's lot. The association (that one keeps) is determined by the intellect in terms of its thinking. So one accordingly becomes that what one thinks. The good or evil deeds depend upon the kind of association the intellect entertains. It is for this reason that the saints have emphasised the need for righteous fellowship. Attains the intellect the state of aloofness when it sinks deep in the essential nature of the Self.

Qs. Why, sir, is it so that men of evil character seem to be enjoying life, whereas the righteous ones (seem) to be suffering from material wants?

Ans. Suffers that individual from material want who gives up self-exertion. The people of other countries seem to be following certain principles of life, and (the main principle seems to be): renounce not self-exertion. They (i.e., the people of foreign countries) are not afraid either of loss or gain. They continue their work and are not given to untruth. They manufacture goods not of sub-standard quality, and they hoard them not. Pure deeds result from pure conduct. (The foreigners) are taught (by their culture) to give that information (concerning the goods) which is true and authentic. The intellect, which is a part of the Universal

Consciousness, is inwardly awake (of foreigners). They eat, drink and sleep in accordance with the programme they have laid down. Success is not merely achieved by repeating Ram, Ram, Ram. Do right deeds and seek not the fruit thereof. To be content with what one has is the supreme spiritual act.

How can (we) be said to be men of religion? when we neither (engage) in self-exertion nor incarnate the righteous principles. The people (of our country) speak much, whereas foreigners are the doers. They (i.e., the foreigners) may not succeed in finding Ram (God), but they make good use of his (God's) creative play. The foreigners come here and engage in acts of charity, whereas the people of our country are (engaged in) adulterating food-stuffs. The cloth (that is manufactured by our own people) is of sub-standard quality. In short, no deed (of our people) may be said to be pure or clean. The significance of righteous fellowship, in this context, denotes the dissemination of right information. When informed correctly, the result is bound to be good. May Lord bless you with pure intelligence.

Qs. How, sir, is one's character formed? There are rich and there are poor (in our country). The poor want to be rich. Is it possible for the poor to be rich?

Ans. The character (of a person) is determined by (the deeds) he does. As one goes on doing more and more deeds, the intellect subsequently absorbs the essential character of its deeds. Thus is facilitated the passage for character-formation. In accordance with one's character is the nature of the melieu determined. So one either becomes rich or poor in accordance with one's nature and melieu.

The next question you asked: Is it possible for the poor to (become) rich? In response to your question the following prescription may be prescribed: Examine yourself critically. (Critical self-examination), according to *faqirs*, is to do right deed. Begin your (spiritual life) by sharing your comforts with them who lack them. If you walk upon this path, you shall definitely be rich (spiritually). Within ten years of time your life

will radically change (for the good). (A day will come) when you will discard the clothes of poverty by becoming rich (inwardly).

You must adhere to one more virtue by the use of which life shall (abundantly) be benefited. Make your life as simple as possible, and thereby all unnecessary wants shall take leave of you. Thus will you get rid of one great defect.

Qs. Is it true that an individual can change (the course of) residual impressions?

Ans. The individual (is bestowed) with the capacity of either increasing or decreasing the volume of impressions. They who adhere to the path of truth, with a firm will, are able to rise above their impure dispositions.

Qs. Allies of the body, from the beginning, are said to be hope, pain, pleasure, craving, etc. Is it true that these companions (of the body) shall cease to be with the destruction of the body?

Ans. Hope, craving, etc., are in no way related to the body. They are, in effect, bound up with the self (i.e., ego). Upon the destruction of the body move (hope, craving, etc.) along with the self to another body.

Freedom from (Mental and Physical) Changes

Qs. As sleep is said to be a psycho-physical operation, freedom from both (sleep) and laziness is difficult to obtain. If one sleeps not, the body experiences fatigue. What, sir, do you say concerning (sleep)?

Ans. All the processes of life -- like eating, drinking, sleeping, or birth, growth, youth, old age, etc. -- oppress the individual to the extent his phenomenality is concerned. Thus these various changes facilitate the passage for the experiences of pain and pleasure. Remains the individual tied to the bondage of suffering to the extent the rays of knowledge penetrate him not. Upon the attainment of knowledge the individual self comes to know the nature of the body, and "what" and "how" of the changes of the body, who is the speaker within it, and how the state of non-difference is realised. When awakened fully, there is nothing more that the self needs to know. The intellect should be firmly established in the path of truth by reflecting repeatedly over the thoughts (as mentioned above). There, then, comes a time when total freedom from thoughts is realized.

Qs. When shall we, sir, be able to obtain freedom from such psycho-physical operations as sleep, laziness, etc.?

Ans. The nature of the body, like sleep, eating of food, drinking of water, rising from sleep, birth, growth, youth, etc., will continue to be till the time the body lasts. Freedom from such psycho-

physical operations comes to be only when the intellect attains total unity with the Self by discarding its association with the body.

Qs. What is the method by the use of which five psycho-physical deficiencies of anger, lust, etc. be overcome?

Ans. Faith in God is the best means of lowering the measure of inward operations. Learn to sit near them who are the lovers of God. All the psycho-physical dispositions will begin to disappear the moment you begin to comprehend the secret of truth. By itself shall your intentions be fulfilled if you are able to differentiate between duty and self-interest and so be disposed towards that which we call duty. Even if your intentions remain unfulfilled, worry not, as Lord will take necessary care of you. Go beyond the states of worry and patience. It is in transcendence that your needs shall be provided, no matter what the state is. Worry no more, as He always worries about you.

Qs. Renunciation of self-identity (in terms of ego) is far more difficult than the giving up of such disposition as lust, anger, etc. What, sir, is your opinion?

Ans. It is not a question of giving up; rather it is a matter of killing it. It is a question of giving up of false attachment and pride. The spiritual exercises like asceticism, repetition of the holy Name, or yogic techniques are meant to awaken the inward poverty, which, in other words, means the awareness that this body belongs not to me. Whatever I possess is of the Lord. (It is a state in which) one remains powerless even while attaining all the powers. Few blessed ones are able to interiorise what they earn spiritually. (The interiorisation is of the same pattern) which the businessmen employ to protect their hard-earned wealth. (None can think of them to be rich) as their external make-up is ordinary. Never do they show off their wealth even if they may be extremely rich. The men of discrimination or knowledge likemanner function in the world.

Renounces he nothing who, although he may have given up

riches and possessions, thinks of himself as a renouncer, and thereby glories in his ego. Real jewel, indeed, is he who, while possessing intelligence, wealth and power, is free from the sense of ego or self-identity.

Qs. When, Maharaj Ji, is it possible for man to be fearless?

Ans. Fearless state is attained when the intellect, by abandoning the swing of doubt or uncertainty, attains firmness, and orients itself towards God. Otherwise fear, in one form or the other, crops up.

Qs. In what way or manner can freedom from mental factors or constructs be obtained?

Ans. Ceases anger to be when love, in equal measure, is directed towards all. Both greed and egoity are abandoned when all are served with caritative concern. Destroyed are both attachment and lust when the Lord is seen as real of the Real. Attains the intellect the knowledge of the absolute unity, and thereby freedom from the products of *maya*, when the disposition of love of God and service of others firmly establishes itself in the individual's mind. The consequence of this is the realization of the supreme state, that is, of indivisible peace.

Qs. Is there a simple method by the use of which freedom from all mental and physical operations can be attained?

Ans. Obtains the individual imperishable peace upon the destruction of all psycho-physical operations, which come to be when one puts the body, mind and wealth in the service of others. Service or charity is the supreme spiritual act and also the path of spiritual glory. Demonic is the intelligence of the one who is devoid of the sentiment of charity, as such an individual always is troubled by his own desires. (Such an individual) always burns in the flames of such ills as greed, delusion, egoity, envy, etc. This kind of life is as painful as is that of hell. Devoid of generosity is the mind of (such people). The real nature of Death is really reflected by the darkness of selfishness. It is (selfishness) which makes the individual suffer repeatedly the delusion

of pleasurable (experiences). To be free from this pain the use of the axe of service is much more easeful. Deprived of real joy is the individual in whom the disposition of service is absent.

The Nature of Religion and Service

Q. — Is a possible for religious and politics to go together?

The Nature of Religion and Service

Qs. No need for further conversation is felt upon hearing your (spiritual) discourse. There are, however, numerous sects and sub-sects in Hinduism, and each sect makes its own (spiritual) claims. How should one, in such a situation, judge as to whose assertion is worthy of reflection?

Ans. No religious claim is higher than the one (which teaches) merciful compassion and the adoration of the Self. No difficulty will you encounter in deciding (as to whose claims are proper) if your reflection is rooted in discriminating understanding. Religion (or spirituality) is nothing but to love in equal measure all living creatures. Which means never to entertain the thought of harming others, to see the one and the same Self in all, and seek (nothing) but the (Self). (Thus) the heart of religion lies not in external rituals.

Qs. Is it possible for religion and politics to go together?

Ans. Do not be of the opinion that religion and politics belong not to each other. It is, however, true to say that true religion and the satanic politics of today cannot go together. A religion which is tradition-bound is full of such features which are to be found in a sect, a denomination or an institution. (These) features have stemmed from the ethnic roots, traditions, modes of dress and food, or from the traditions of the country. Thus the tradition-bound religion is characterised by such traditions as like going to

church (on Sundays), or worshipping God in a particular manner, offering of *namāz*, keeping of fasts, or maintaining a long tuft of hair (on the top of head), wearing of thread, or putting the marks on the forehead, wearing of bracelets and drawers, etc. These (specific) traditions are in no manner related to the heart or essence of religion. In fact (real) religion is concerned with inner peace, whereas traditions (as externals) belong to the body. Real religion and right politics, having the same goal, are identical. (The worldly) sects are not concerned with real religion. (As right politics and real religion) are the organic parts of humanity, they, thus, express the essential law of human nature. The nature of real religion and right politics consists in comforting the oppressed, in loving the entire world, in thinking good of others by renouncing self-interest. Real peace envelops the world when right politics is made use of by renunciate rulers.

Qs. In what way is one profited by being righteous? What significance may be (attached) to the natural way of life?

Ans. Look at the way Nature function. Each entity of Nature has the tendency of functioning in such a manner as to cause comfort to other entities. (It means) that it is the law of selfgiving that has determined the nature (of natural entities). The sun, the moon, trees, plants, rivers, fire, air, etc. – all of them work for the good of others. Make your life as natural (as is the life of natural entities). Your life shall, indeed, be like unto gods, nay, full of glory, if you always think good of others. Thus (personal) life must be made as a means of comfort for others. (Thus) will life reflect the benign and auspicious nature.

(With such a mind) shall Nature extend its support unto you. (As a consequence of this support) you will experience the expansion of spiritual delight. They who think of personal comforts alone, cause harm to others. (Such persons) lead a life which is demonic and which burns in the flames of craving.

Comforts of pleasure may be sought within the norms or limits of spiritual tradition. (Such a mind) shall be able to endure catastrophic moments (if they ever occur). Seek not such expe-

riences of ease which will debilitate you. Suffering is the greatest teacher of man, as it teaches as to how to lead correctly the natural way of life. The wealth that you posses may have come to you either through self-exertion or through past deeds, needs to be used in such a manner that the future generations must be able to endure hardship in case the (inherited) wealth is lost. What it amounts to saying is that you must be able to endure hunger in case of non-availability of food. Further, the use of wealth must be made in such a manner that the intellect goes not astray, but remains awake.

The awakened intelligence is said to be that which keeps one fully awake by not succumbing to the slumber of forgetfulness. In other words, (the awakened intelligence) denotes the power of differentiating right from wrong. As and when intelligence goes astray, it sees defects in that which is perfect, and perfection in that which is defective. The essence of this argument is that if one has the experience of pleasure in far excess, the very pleasure ultimately turns out to be the source of pain.

Qs. How much should a householder contribute to the works of charity?

Ans. With a selfless disposition should one spend one-tenth of one's income on charitable works. One may spend one-fifth of one's income on charity if the earning is in far excess. (The significance of such spiritual works) denotes that purity of life is not possible unless the disposition of service is fully selfless. The acts or deeds which uphold the principles of *samata* (of spiritual unity) are uplifting existentially. Spiritual good, indeed, comes to them who extend their help to widows, sick, destitute and the orphans. Spiritual benefit is derived by them, too, who spend their earnings in accordance with some other principles of spirituality.

Harmed are they spiritually who spend on themselves that which needs to be spent on others, and it is a principle announced by the sages. Attain they the real spiritual perfection who, with the attitude of a renunciate, spend their wealth on good works. The flame of sacrifice must burn much more intensively in him who

believes in the cosmic vision of unity, and so accordingly there is spiritual awakening as well as light of peace in the country.

The principles of charity are the following:

And the greatest form of charity is
to spend on such acts which help in the expansion of knowledge,
in the eradication of disease,
in national and religious awakening,
in looking after them who are of noble conduct and pursue gnosis,
in uplifting the poor and the orphans,
in unifying the country and the fellowship where truth is preached,
in providing food and clothing to them who suffer from want,
in constructing hostels, wells, ponds, roads, bridges, etc.

From such charitable deeds stem forth, indeed, spiritual blessings (in abundance).

However hard one may try, impossible it is to be pure of intellect if the acts of charity stem from self-interest. Attains he the spiritual expansion who offers his services as duty. The three (chains) that bind man are the body, mind and wealth. To be free from these chains the path of renunciation has been prescribed. Charity, in fact, is nothing but renunciation. Obtains he freedom from the bondage of these chains who, with an attitude of selflessness, takes to the path of renunciation. Suffers he repeatedly from the limitations of bondage who prides in his renunciation.

Selfless Action

Qs. Will you, sir, briefly tell us (concerning) the nature of selfless action?

Ans. Why not! Listen! A selfless deed is said to be that which issues forth from such a spiritual condition in which the intellect is resolute while engaged in action. In other words, it means that the intellect suffers no more from the dialectic of pain and pleasure, that is, remains free from the impact of the fruit of a deed. This phenomenal world (of ours) is like an unfathomable ocean, and it can be crossed by them who are (spiritually) skillful and full of zeal.

Qs. Just now you said that the worldly ocean can be crossed by them who are skillful and full of zeal. Who, sir, are (spiritually) skillful and zealous?

Ans. An attempt will be made to make you understand the solution (of your question). (A person of zeal is he) who is ever ready to die for the attainment of spiritual knowledge of the Self, and always remains confident of reaching the ultimate goal. To be skillful in means denotes to be confident of success no matter what the hurdles may be. There is hardly any difference between the two, as both have almost an identical meaning.

Recollection of the Name, Meditation and Yoga

Qs. Afflicted as I am by physical ailments, how can I make use of my body, in such a situation, for spiritual purposes? What should I do in such a condition?

Ans. The pain and suffering you are undergoing (at present) are consequences of your dispositions you have inherited from your previous existences. Never will the (afflictions) allow you to rest in peace. Worry not about this perishable body. Whatever be the physical condition, try your best to meditate upon the holy Name. Be not concerned as to whether you are following the method of meditation correctly or not. Allow not the intellect to stray from the path. As the intellect by nature seeks association, it is, thus, advisable to keep it away from the association of the body and of the world. (When completely dissociated), it will by itself seek the association of the holy Name. Make the use of the body as an instrument of service. (Practice) the meditative absorption by putting trust in (your) Guru. You will achieve some spiritual state only when you understand the perishable nature of the body. Accordingly does mind concentrate upon the holy Name by de-linking itself from the world.

Qs. How is it possible to continue the practice of meditation and reflection while engaged in the activities of the world?

Ans. The practice of meditative reflection of the Name, while engaged in worldly business, may be continued in this manner: Whatever

worldly activity may be undertaken, it must be free from self-motivation or interest. While performing the worldly acts, the inclination (of the mind), at the end of the deed, must be of continuing the practice of the Name. If the endeavour is (truly) directed to this end, the mind shall subtly be attracted towards the Name. What it means is this: while performing the worldly deeds, the mind may not be in a position to practice (the reflection) of the Name. It will, however, remain subtly inclined towards the Name. At the end of (the worldly) task must begin the practice of the Name with the same zeal which already exist in the mind.

Qs. What spiritual acts must be kept in mind while worshipping the Lord?

Ans. Possible it is not to conduct the divine worship without deep concentration and mental equilibrium. With an integrated intellect the mind seeks the Object of its worship.

Qs. Does one spiritually profit by repeating the various Names of God like Waheguru, Allah, Satnam, Ram, Hari, Gayatri, Om, Krishna, etc.?

Ans. The function of the mind, dearly beloved, is to reflect, to recollect time-and-again (that which has to be remembered). From ancient times has reflection concerning the phenomenal world continued. By repeatedly thinking over the world has one become like unto the world. It is the nature of the mind to remember (events and things) again and again. (An object is) conceptualised only when it is first remembered or recollected. When the nature (of the object) has been conceptualised, then are (its) attributes imagined or constructed. (When both nature and attributes have been constructed by imagination), then an attempt is made at possessing it. Having known the nature of the mind, the saints have emphasised upon the recollection of God in comparison to the world, so that Transcendent Presence may be much more experienced through meditative recollection. The memory of the unreal world will vanish (from the mind) to the extent the holy Name of the Lord is firmly established in consciousness. When

memory is fully established in the consciousness of God, there will be total dissociation from the world and so the transcendent bliss of the Self will be experienced in abundance.

Fear of the Guru shall pervade your mind if you think of him as your Lord and Master. With this fear shall faith arise in you. With the help of faith shall there come a state of feeling which will enable the disciple to be ever ready at annihilating himself in the will of his Guru. (When in such a state) the disciple shall be blessed by the grace of Guru, which will enable him to have the direct cognitive experience of the Self. It is the key of reaching the ultimate goal, of crossing the ocean. Shaikh Saidi has rightly said that void is attained upon being void. What it means is that, by annihilating the self in the will of the Guru, is one established in ultimate reality.

Faqir Pirashah of Mirpur was a saint of high calibre. Once, while travelling along with his disciple, he came across a small stream. While crossing the stream, he asked the disciple to cross it by repeating the name of his Guru. When in the middle of the stream, the disciple thought that, after all, his teacher is not different from any other human being. Instead of calling his name, let me repeat the name of Allah (so thought the disciple). He began to drown in the stream when such (doubtful) thoughts arose in him. The Guru shouted from the bank of the stream: you fool, think of Allah later. Try at least to reach your teacher. Having understood the import of the words of his teacher, the disciple crossed the stream while calling the name of his Guru. The core of what has been said is that God is reached through submission unto Guru.

- Qs. The ultimate Reality or God is spoken by thousands of names. Is it possible to attain spiritual perfection simply by meditating on any one of his name? I have seen people who throughout life meditate upon the Name, yet remain bereft of any tangible gain. There must, indeed, be some secret in it. What opinion do you, sir, have about it?**

Ans. Various are the names of the Lord, and all of them are perfectly correct. That divine Name alone bestows spiritual perfection upon the aspirant which is received from a perfect saint and which is meditated in accordance with the instructions of the Guru. To illustrate the point, let us make the use of an example. In the shop of the sword-maker we find nothing but swords hanging on the walls of the shop. All the swords we see are swords, but the real sword is said to be that which falls in the hands of a brave person. It is the expert in swords who knows how the swords have to be used. As an expert, whatever he says has to be believed. The swords that we find in the shop of the sword-maker are swords in name only. They simply have to be treated as mere pieces of steel (until we know their real worth). Analogously speaking, the same is the case concerning the practice of the Name. Indeed, various are the Names of God, yet the glory of that divine Name is immeasurable which is received from *sadguru* or real teacher. You are right in observing that thousands there are who practice the meditation of the Name, yet nothing worthwhile comes into their hands. In every kind of work, whether it be worldly or transcendental, no success or perfection is possible without skillful means. All spiritual efforts go waste on account of the lack of proper means. The same is the case with people who achieve nothing even after exerting all efforts. The saints have said that millions of sins are washed away of them who meditate the True Name. If one meditates the Name in accordance with the instructions of the Guru, there remains nothing further to be done.

Qs. (As this question is put by a Hakim, so its import may be understood in a broader sense). Maharaj Ji, you always say that necessary it is to be punctual concerning spiritual practice. (In my case it so happens that) as and when I sit for spiritual practice, there is the call of a patient. What shall I do in such a situation? Personally I feel that in such a situation patient needs to be attended first?

Ans. As you yourself are sick, so you too are seeking treatment. The sickness from which you are suffering is with you from ancient times. Necessary it is to make exertion for its removal. The

moment your will firmly believes in divine providence by expressing itself that Lord alone is the remover of pain and by his grace the illness of the sick will be removed, that very moment shall your sickness vanish. The pain or ill-health that is due to one's past deeds, is unavoidable. None can remove it. Why should you worry unnecessarily!

Qs. Does it mean that even if the patient is in a terrible condition of pain, one should continue the practice of meditation?

Ans. Yes, you are right. When in meditation, continue to be in meditation. Even if your house is on fire, you must not get up from meditation. Even if terrible catastrophe may occur, one must never leave the practice of meditation before the fixed time.

Qs. In the initial stages, sir, one experiences some difficulty concerning spiritual reflection. Will it be better initially to begin the spiritual practice by visiting holy places, so that the passage for inward reflection may be facilitated? For the young and the illiterate difficult, indeed, is this practice? May you kindly throw some light on it.

Ans. It is not time for twists and turns, and so walk straight. The distance to be covered is long, whereas life is too short. As the Path of the Saints is one and the same, so the practice of the five principles of *samata* (like simplicity, truthfulness, service, fellowship of the righteous, and meditative recollection) brings spiritual good. These principles must be imparted even to children. The greatest worship of the Lord is to be righteous in life.

Qs. Is it spiritually beneficial to practice meditation in solitude or together with other devotees, as we find the devotees of some organisations practising meditation together?

Ans. The practice of meditation must always be conducted in solitude. Such a kind of isolation is needed so that none may know that one is meditating. Never should one practice meditation with others, as in such a condition mind will be unable to fix its attention. A

diffused mind will (always) direct its attention either to people who are (sitting) close by or to the ones who may be at a distance. (In such a condition) mind loses its integrity. Such a mind always thinks it is better to sit for a longer period of meditation (as it is afraid) of the accusation (of others) for being careless. Thus this kind of mind always is full of agitation. (To bring calmness to mind) it is better to meditate in the solitude of silence.

Qs. Even after meditative reflection the mental dispositions continue to be. (In such a situation) is it possible to have the experience of the Imperishable Word -- the Word about which the Vedas speak as Sound-Absolute?

Ans. The Light of the Word shall not be revealed unto the one in whom the mental factors continue to be. Contrary to each other are both of them (i.e., the Word and the mental factors). Understand it well that (none) shall be established in the Word till the mental factors continue their operation.

Qs. Why is the holy Name being glorified? Is it an entity (in-itself)?

Ans. Each (physical) entity has four marks: name, form, attribute and (power to) act. A pear (for example) is name; its construction is its form, whereas its sweet taste is its quality. The indwelling Word is known only to the knowers of the Self. The Word which the Guru imparts (to the disciple) is identical with the indwelling-Word. The eternal Word reveals itself as Sound when (one) meditates upon the initiatory Word. (As a consequence of this revelation) release (from bondage) is realized. It is for this reason that the Name is both praised and glorified.

Qs. How is it possible for the intellect to have a non-defective vision (of Reality) when it is always inclined towards impure entities?

Ans. The intellect can have the non-defective vision (of Reality) when it frees itself from impure influences. Through great effort and devotion can imperfections be overcome. The intellect, under the

influence of sense-organs and mind, performs both good and evil deeds, and so remains tied to (the psycho-physical) operations. Experiences the intellect the non-active inward Self when it renounces the greatest defect of mental dispositions by delinking its links with the mind and sense-organs. (The spirit of detachment comes to be) by listening, with a mind full of trust and devotion, to the revelatory Word of the Guru and by perceiving inwardly the will of the Lord. (With such a practice alone) (the intellect) attains both purity and the nature of transcendent peace. It is a state of a fully awakened, that is, it is a stage of *samata* or of *nirvana*.

Qs. What is the nature of meditative recollection?

Ans. The nature of the mind is to reflect, or, in other words, to remember. The world itself is nothing but a reflection of memory. The mind is alive when it thinks or conceives. Both memory and thinking continue to be unless the mind is not restored to its primal condition. The mind will never be set a right unless the necessary arrangements are made for its proper channelling. Awakened state of *nirvana* comes to be when the operations of memory and of conceptualisation cease to be. Recollection takes place in the heart, whereas service is actualised through the body. All these spiritual practices are intended to overcome the bodily motions. Release from bondage is realized when meditative recollection, with lips closed, is undertaken. (All the spiritual means or practices) can be received only from a true Guru.

Qs. What will be the direction of our mental make-up at the time when, through the practice of meditative reflection, the inarticulate sound of the Self is experienced?

Ans. Why do you, dearly beloved, ask such questions? Such questions are directly related to spiritual experiences. Even then the *faqir* will give sufficient indications for your satisfaction. With the arising of inward sound of the Self the dispositions of the mind disappear. Whatever deed an individual does, it is spontaneous and desireless.

Qs. Arise various kinds of thoughts (in the mind) as and when we sit for meditation, and so difficult it is to measure the scale of spiritual progress.

Ans. The goal (to be reached) is, indeed, a difficult one. Spiritual progress is possible only if exertion is characterised by a step-by-step approach. Even though proper spiritual guidance is available to you, yet success can be achieved only with a will which is firm and faith which is true. Step-by-step alone goes one upward.

Qs. Is it, sir, profitable (spiritually) to engage in the study of sacred scriptures?

Ans. Comes to know one the real condition of life (by the study) of sacred scriptures.

Qs. Kindly instruct us in such a simple and easeful spiritual technique by the means of which the mind may both be restful and inward-looking. The saints have spoken about many methods (by the use of which both inwardness and restfulness of the mind can be realised), and also the sacred scriptures are full of them. There are methods which tell us that the meditation of the Name must be done in the heart by closing both eyes and ears. Some people call it the method of penetrating the wheel. There are methods of meditation by the use of which revelation of light occurs in the heart, or between the eyebrows. In some methods it is imagined that light descends downwards from head to heart, from heart to navel, and from navel it spreads all over the body. Some say that in these places one should fix one's attention, and accordingly utter the word *om* uninterruptedly. Some believe that concentration of mind may be realised by making use of such *mudras* as *kechari*, etc. As you are the supreme yogi, may you instruct us in the royal yoga, that is, raja-yoga!

Ans. All these various spiritual methods are seen to be of easeful nature. In so far their validity is concerned, they have received the necessary imprimature from the *faqirs*. The ordinary man

of the world is not in the know of this secret. Even when practising the best of the means, the worldly people are unable to recognise the benign spiritual path. The yoga technique of breathing is not of today. The ancient sages have attained the spiritual perfection by practising the method of controlled breathing. This technique has been well explained by Lord Krishna in the fifth, sixth and eighth chapters of the *Gita*. The secret (aspects) of the technique have not been revealed. Arjuna is thus addressed: "The secret shall be revealed to you in accordance with your love and trust provided you, with an attitude of humility, take refuge in saints, in men of impeccable character, and in them who know the Self.

The import of the above address (of Sri Krishna to Arjuna) is to see to it that no seeker falls in the pit of delusion. Immediately shall you be satisfied of the fact that the spiritual path you have learnt from your Guru is identical with the method which Lord Krishna himself has taught. What is needed is that one should be close to one's teacher with true trust. How can ordinary people know the inner content of, or the methods of, Yoga? when they blindly follow the techniques which they have heard from others. (There are people) who claim to be yogis while resting in their (comfortable) beds. Yogic perfection is not attained by sitting upon high thrones.

To see the Light of the Word is a matter of intuition. The techniques you just mentioned are the (best) means for self-delusion. Revealed is not Reality as Sound through the practice of these methods. Unless the exhaled and inhaled breaths are unified through the medium of seed-*mantra* (there is no possibility of success). To the extent the seeker gains efficiency in this method, to that extent become mind, life-force and Name of one essence. (Upon the attainment of this state) the intellect begins to experience, in the navel, the spiritual delight of nectar (which flows forth) from the immortal Word. Know that the nature of this condition is identical with that of Guru. There flows forth the immortal nectar in the navel, which (in mystical terms) moves towards the cave in the Sky of Consciousness. As a consequence of this experience, there arises deep faith. In this manner the

mystical ecstasy is experienced in the head, between the eyebrows, etc. Then takes place the opening of the Lotus of the Heart, which (enables the seeker) to have direct experience of the Self. It is the appearance of the inward Sound which is called by various names like Unstruck Sound, the Word, etc. The symbolism of Ganga coming out from the matted locks of Shiva denotes the flowing of the stream of bliss. Numerous saints have attained this state of total absorption through the method of negation. All the saints like Kabir, Nanak, Krishna, Rama, Goraksa, Kapila, Vyasa - are of one opinion:

Close neither your eyes nor your ears,
Trouble not the body with penances.
The knot between the eye-brows shall be loosened
If you unify the exhaled and the inhaled breaths - so says Kabir.

Is there still something more left? As you are sitting close by, you are, thus, being instructed in that (secret) knowledge which, after fifty years of time, will remain hidden from others. The (glitter) of ordinary methods is (meant) to attract (the mind) of ordinary people. The path of Rajayoga shall be easeful when the various techniques of Yoga and of Hathayoga have been completed. You will never find sages like Kapila, Patanjali or Shiva in such meditative postures in which their eyes or ears are closed. All sages are shown in their lotus postures. That meditative posture alone should be practised which is free from all restrictions.

The method of closing of eyes and ears is meant to delude people. A flock (that is without a shepherd) will continue to be deluded. Disappeared the secret path (among the Sikhs) of the Word after the tenth Guru. Each (so-called Guru) is establishing his own path in accordance with his own interpretation. Even if some may know the path, they, however, are not allowed to disclose it. Rather they are (to be found) meditating in the solitude of forests. Most of you think that spirituality is a cheap commodity.

Qs. Even if one has a slight spiritual fall, there is the arising of agitation (in the mind). Is there a treatment for it?

Ans. The unwholesome melieu will loose the power of troubling (the mind) when meditation and reflection are practised intensively. As you are still in the process of perfecting your moral life, there is still lot of distance to be covered in order to attain the state of Self-knowledge. One-pointed absorption shall not be attained unless meditative practice and reflection gain ascendancy. Everything shall be right (if) there is expansion of meditation and reflection.

Qs. Which is the state of meditative absorption?

Ans. Disappears the perception of doership to the extent the intellect establishes itself in the True Name. Experienced is the absence of disposition to the extent the sense of doership is negated. The intellect attains its imperishable nature to the measure dispositions are destroyed. It is the state of rest which is spoken of as the state of meditative absorption.

Qs. The mind, when in meditation, runs hither and thither. How can it be brought to one-pointed concentration?

Ans. It is an old sickness of the mind (to be diffused). Step-by-step (approach) alone can bring (its operations) under control. As and when your mind, during the time of meditation, runs after the objects, kill it with the sword of Divine Will, and then continue (your practice of) meditation. It is a spiritual praxis which is characterised by living death. Thus (rightly) is it spoken by men of wisdom as (the method of) Fire of Knowledge. It is the innate habit of the mind to be disposed towards that towards which it is directed. It runs her-and-there during the time of meditation, because it is deprived of such (sensations) which it seeks. When in meditation, go inwards with a disposition which says to itself : "As everything is happening according to a set Divine plan, so why should I trouble myself unnecessarily?" Leave aside all your troubles, and turn your attention towards God. Whatever be the nature of worldly pain, the mind, however, has to experience it. You will have to change the direction of your thinking if you desire the stability of mind. Think not of the body; rather consider it to be dead. The living-force within the body repre-

sents the real nature of Being. Free will be the mind from the chains of attachment the moment the body is treated as a dead (commodity). So, leave aside the crooked ways (of the world).

Qs. What, sir, is crookedness?

Ans. The intellect tastes the juices (of delight) which the body obtains through the organs of perception. The crookedness arises when the intellect is influenced by the sense-fluids of sense-organs like the eyes, the nose, the ears, the tongue and the generative organ. He alone is a great ascetic whose conduct is pure, whose life is righteous, and who seeks not the delights of sense-fluids. Far excellent is such a person in comparison to the one who simply dwells in the forest.

Qs. What, sir, is Yoga'.

Ans. That which effects union between the individual and the Absolute is called Yoga.

Qs. There come moments when the mind likes neither to meditate nor to engage in self-study. (In such moments) sleep and sloth overpower the will, and thereby the mind spontaneously thinks of sense-objects alone. What must I do when thoughts of most heinous form arise in the mind?

Ans. As and when such moments arise, one should not be afraid of them. (The best way of tackling the situation) is to seek solitude by renouncing all activities. In equal measure both spiritual praxis and reflection must be strengthened, and the elusive thought-waves of the mind must be analysed. (The analysis of thoughts may be carried in the following way):

Why are you troubling yourself, O fool? Have the sense-organs even been satisfied with the sensations with which you want to feed them? Will the available sensations ever satisfy the senses? Never, never! Give (in this regard) your decision! Whatever investigations you may have carried out, go and put them into practice. Never forget (while putting into practice the conclu-

sions of your investigation) the saying of the *faqirs*: "All are thirsty, and (all) are in a terrible condition (on account of this thirst)." Since the case is such, why then should one rest in spiritual darkness? It is the innate nature of the senses to remain always thirsty. Seek, therefore, Truth by the knowledge of which the thirst of the senses will be quenched for ever. Towards this end must mind always be made attentive, and (for this purpose) solitude needs to be cultivated.

Qs. Solitude (will prove) to be very harmful to the man of lust, as he will think of nothing (when alone) but of lustful thoughts. Is this analysis right?

Ans. (What you have said) may be true (concerning the lustful man). This analysis, however, cannot be applied to an aspirant or to the practitioner of meditation. If such a situation ever arises for (the aspirant or for the meditator), it will not last for long. There are (no doubt) moments when base thoughts arise (in the mind). (The best way) to treat them is solitude. For the worldly people, who may be the seekers of the Name, this method is not the best one.

Qs. When does mind experience emptiness?

Ans. How is it possible for the stream of thoughts to arise if there is no empty (space) in the mind? When you, for example, think of constructing a house, you, first of all, will have to create sufficient space in the mind. Sufficient space for (the concept of house) can be located in the mind if the empty (space) is available. What initially is conceived conceptually by the mind is actualised on the (flat space of the earth) when a house is constructed. The occurrence of empty space in the mind is, thus, a self-evident fact. Further you may be informed that the five cognitive organs are the main receptacles of the five forms of subtle energy of the five elements. How these (subtle) energies (of the five elements) function in the human body is explained by the sages thus:

It is the element space which gives rise to mind, and thereby the birth of thinking (or of consciousness) is facilitated. The subtle

energetic form of the element space is the sound, which is both received and abandoned by the ear. The element earth is related to the nose, which both receives and abandons (the energy of smell). The element water is related to the tongue, which both associates with and dissociates from the sensation of taste. The element air is related to skin which experiences the sensation of touch. The element fire is related to the eyes, which perceive forms.

Qs. May you kindly tells us as to how mind's disposition towards simplicity can be actualised!

Ans. The entire complexity of your question could be made easy if you make it (what will be explained below) your own. Think of a situation in which you are ready to have a meal. If your mind is attracted by the look of food, you may eat a portion of it while leaving rest for others. This is also possible that, instead of eating yourself, you may distribute the entire amount of food among others. If the second option is applied, the mind will remain ever cautious so that no error of judgement is made. In this way you will be able to rule over your mind. Mind must always be kept away from objects which attract it or towards which it is drawn. Wear (for example) such clothes which allow not the mind to think: "How beautiful clothes have I worn, or how beautiful I look!" The mind turns towards the meditative practice of the Name only when it receives hard knocks.

Qs. Why must we (conduct) worship when it is neither morning nor evening?

Ans. The term *sandhya* means to bring two things together. You shall know the full import of *sandhya* (that is, of worship) only when a true teacher reveals unto you the secret of it. (Without initiation) the performance of mystical worship bears no fruit. (Subject) to deception are they (who do not undergo initiation).

Qs. When does the intellect's (inclination) for externalisation ceases to be?

Ans. To the extent breathing, through meditation, attains subtleness, to that extent loving disposition towards the transcendent Word deepens. The interior Word always vibrates within, and the intellect experiences it upon the attainment of purity. The ecstasy of bliss is experienced when the intellect feeds (the vibration) of the life-force within *sushumananadi* (the mystical channel within the spinal column). (When this) condition is attained, the inclination of the intellect for externality ceases to be.

Qs. What does *surati* mean?

Ans. The word *surati* means "attention," that is, intellect.

Qs. What implicit meaning is contained in the symbolism of four armed Narayana on a serpent?

Ans. (This symbolism) explains certain interior (states of consciousness). The cosmic serpent denotes the mystical lotus in the navel, whereas Narayana is the symbol of the interior Word or Sound, as the Transcendent Word is cognised as Lord and Master in the lotus of the navel.

Qs. Such words as, for example, *easeful vein*, *three realms*, *vacuity in the head*, etc., have been used in the Vani to describe the various mystical states? What actually do these terms denote?

Ans. Certain indications (concerning the meaning of the above words) are to be found in the mystical lore of Yoga. Within this (physical) body of five elements have the yogis apperceived (the Absolute) as *Sound-brahman*. The states or conditions which the yogis have experienced from the initial stage to the stage of perfection are being indicated by the above terms.

The mystical terms like the "opening up", "inward cave," or "the sky of consciousness" – all of them denote (the experiences which occur) in the head. The space between the eye-brows is spoken of as "the meeting of the three." In likemanner throat,

heart, navel denote different mystical centres. When the intellect totally sinks in the absorption (of the Self), it is in the head, that is, at the place where the tuft of hair is kept (in which the mystical state of non-thought is experienced). Ask no more (questions) concerning such mystical states which are hidden. Such questions alone shall be answered which concern themselves with the practical aspects of meditation. (That which is secret) ~~is the~~ sole concern of lovers. (The lovers of God) give up everything in this life for (their Beloved).

Qs. You have elsewhere said that there are five types of life-forces in the body. How can they individually or collectively be understood?

Ans. How shall you profit spiritually if you lose your way in the laybranthine (of esoteric lore)? Remain conscious always of the fact that Lord alone is true. Whereas the world of phenomena has no real basis. The spiritual practice of inhalation and exhalation needs to be practised by uttering the holy Name in and through the intellect. At an appropriate time shall the secrets be disclosed to you.

Qs. You, sir, know the content of the scriptures. And you always sing the praise of the proclamatory words of the saints. Difficult, however, it is to know the significance of the Word and the Sound, as the scriptures speak only about the glory of the Word, namely, OM. May you kindly disclose the Path which is right and proper.

Ans. How can you understand the secret of the Word when you are still within the four walls of the body? Open the doors of your heart and remain not at the initial level of (spirituality). (Know) that the Word is also spoken of as the *mystical sound*. Open the pages of scriptures, and (you will) find out for yourself where the mystical Sound has not been praised. He alone is the great yogi from whose mouth has flowed forth nothing but the praise of the Sound-Word. The bell or the conch are mere external symbols (of that which is inward).

Proclaims the *Gita* that among millions is there a yogi who apprehends directly the Self. The glory of the Name has been sung by the saints from beginningless time. The filth and the dispositions of attachment are washed away by (the power) of the Word alone. The mind shall be restless unless it rests not in the Name. The subject (of mysticism) is too deep and subtle (for the mind to grasp).

Finds one that which one seeks. Find they the guidance of a teacher who are desirous of walking on the true path of Spirit. Be constant in your efforts, and never give up struggle (against evil). Lord will definitely bless you with his grace. (As the saints depend upon Divine grace), they are, thus, neither found in monasteries nor do they seek the company of others. As and when you find time, go and participate in the fellowship of (true) believers.

Qs. You have elsewhere said that the glory of the unstruck (mystical) Sound and the brilliance of the light of Being surpasses the cosmic roar and the blazing glow of millions of suns. In comparison to the (mystical sound), the (physical) sound in the belly is immediately heard as and when some disorder occurs in the stomach, and the heat of the sun proves oppressive when it touches the optimum point. (If this is the case with ordinary sound heat), then how can the brilliance of the inward Being be endured which surpasses the brilliance of thousands of suns? Or why is it that the cosmic roar of the Word is not heard externally?

Ans. (These mystical themes) are beyond the capacity of mind. The intellect cannot describe (the mystical) states. It can only experience them. The intellect experiences both rest and restlessness on account of its proximity to the body. Both rest and agitation are no more felt when the intellect sinks deeply in the absorption of Supreme of Being. The Supreme Reality is beyond the influence of three attributes (of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*). The Self can neither be heated by the heat (of fire), nor made dry by air, nor drenched by water. (This ultimate state of the Self) is experienced inwardly. The saints alone have the sufficient

courage (of experiencing the Supreme State), for they remain sunk (in this state) whether standing or sitting, drinking or eating. Disappear all the three lacks or deficiencies of sleep, sloth and hunger upon the attainment of the Word. In order not to conceal (the hidden) truth, the saints maintain the worldly traditions by participating in it. (Thus must one know) that the ultimate spiritual state is not the construction of imagination.

By sitting idle you will not experience the supreme state of Spirit. Thus self-exertion is necessary. Even if you experience for two minutes (the state of joy), you will not be able to handle it (by yourself). Therefore, earn sufficient spiritual wealth, preserve it, and take proper advantage of your human birth. Make your life an ideal for others (to follow). Such is delusory nature of *maya* that it allows none to rise above the phenomenal categories. Proper it is for the (intellect) to reflect over the changing nature of the perishable world and of the body. With the practice of meditative recollection and renunciation will the intellect understand itself that it is non-different from the essential nature of the Self. Difficult it is to obtain release (from bondage) unless there is an inward awakening. And the state (of release) is attained when the mind, breath and the Name (become) one.

Qs. What is the meaning of mystical sound?

Ans. The mystical Sound is that Reality which the saints call (the state) of the Supreme Lord -- that is, the Lord of the world, All-illuminating, indivisible, one-without-second, complete in itself, or that essential Being through whom everything appears. It is the transcendent Sound which is the Master, Creator, Life of all. By knowing It not only does one obtain release from all past inherited afflictions, but also the fire of desire is extinguished. The state of fearlessness comes to be (on knowing) the essential nature of the Transcendent Sound. This invisible Reality cannot be seen by the eyes. Established is the intellect in the essential nature of Sound when all hopes, desires and ambitions are abandoned. Thus (the intellect) remains no more in the grip of form. Upon the attainment of differenceless state the intellect experiences nothing but *brahman*. (The attainment of this non-

different state) is called the condition of contemplative sound. The intellect, upon entering this state, gains the power of understanding concerning the real and unreal, true and false. (In this way) factual freedom from *maya* is realised. All the sacred scriptures (of all religions) -- the Vedas, Koran and the Bible -- sing praise and glory of the eternal Sound. The measure of glory (of Sound) will be described by the intellect to the extent it realises its own-being. Some become totally silent upon the attainment of this state, whereas others uplift spiritually people by showing the path of the Lord. Thus new hope throbs the heart of the people when they see the salvific activities of the saints. People, in general, do thus realise that there is a state which is characterised by the ecstasy of self-absorption. The search of this (mystical) state is the purpose of life. The realisation (of this state) is the supreme task (before all of you). In the realisation (of this state) is to be found the supreme peace (of the Lord).

Qs. What, sir, is your view concerning the true Name?

Ans. True Name is that which has its source in the seed-*mantra*, and which is revealed by a perfect yogi, and which can be reflected upon both externally and internally. Stabilise the intellect, eliminate the operations of the mind -- and it can be achieved only if one surrenders at the feet of Guru. It is the practice (of surrender) which is called as Yoga or as the meditation of the Name.

Singing of Hymns

Qs. What, sir, constitutes hymn-singing? Is it profitable to sing hymns accompanied by music?

Ans. The real significance of hymn-singing lies in attempting, with single-minded disposition, to realise total union with the supreme Lord. Today hymn-singing has been reduced to the so-called musical noise and the roaring of voices. Transient is the pleasure that is derived from (such musical singing) and nothing more.

The real hymn-singing may be said to be that, which, at every moment of time, occurs inwardly. On account of ignorance the intellect is unable to experience the real state of joy. Profitable, indeed, is such hymn-singing which, with a mind deeply absorbed in the acts of recollection, is performed silently and inwardly. Spontaneously shall the hymns of glory flow forth the moment the intellect attains to *nirvana* by following the path of the saints, which, in others words, means to sink in the ecstasy of Love Divine within.

Qs. Why, sir, should not we sing hymns of praise when (we see) Lord Krishna himself doing it?

Ans. A yogi like Krishna would never have engaged in singing hymns accompanied by musical noise. It is a lie spread by the people of opposite view. If you desire to imitate Krishna, then you must sing hymns like him on the hood of a snake. Act on the advice which Krishna gave to Arjuna for stabilising the mind.

Determinate and Indeterminate Forms of Worship

Qs. How do you, sir, view idol worship? Are the various methods of idol-worship, like dancing, jumping, ringing of bells, etc., beneficial for the attainment of peace of mind?

Ans. Be not offended. Kabir has decided the matter (concerning the idol-worship) once-for-all in these words:

If by worshipping the stone the Lord is met,
I shall, then, worship a mountain (for higher purposes).
Far better are the stones of a mill,
For they (at least) crush the world of phenomena.

Becomes possible the construction of a mosque
By putting stones and pebbles together.
Goes mullah (to the mosque) and calls God (loudly).
Is God so deaf that he needs to be called loudly.

The *faqirs* care for none when the (real) nature of the world has to be pointed out. (All) external means are meant to keep the mind engaged. The mind is already restless, and it will be more restless if it is made to orient itself to mere externals. (The mind is so unstable) that it expresses its inconstancy by worshipping, at one point of time, Krishna, and Rama, at other. If desire remains unappeased, it (i.e., desire) even will begin to worship Hunuman (for selfish purposes). Full of greed are they, indeed, who (spent their time) in worshipping the various gods and

goddesses, prophets and incarnations, etc., (for selfish ends). In the *Gita* Lord Krishna explains (the true import of worship):

"Properly do not they worship Me, O Arjuna, who worship other divinities. On account of this (improper worship) shall such people be deprived of release, as they continue to be in the grip of the cycle of birth and death. Freed are they by Me from the cycle of birth and death who, being free from greed, worship Me with a mind that is desireless."

In no place does (Lord Krishna) concern with the worship of the body. The text of the *Gita* concerns itself with the (question) of devotion to the Self. The body is subject to constant change. It is the Self alone which is both imperishable and omnipresent. It is the ignorant ones who do not seek the bliss of the Self; (rather they seek the pleasures of the body). Whenever (the intellect) reflects over some worldly problem, it arrives at a proper solution (of the problem) only when the mind is (in the state of) concentration. As the Lord is the Master of entire creation, how can mere dancing or jumping help one in understanding this supreme Reality? With the help of sharp intellect must the subtlest of the subtle (spiritual) state be reached. All doubts shall vanish when (one) reflects over the wisdom of saints. Is it possible for the intellect to incline itself towards true path which suffers from doubt or from the lack of faith? All cannot attain the same (spiritual) state which Caitanya Mahaprabhu or Mira enjoyed, for in them the spiritual flame had been burning for countless existences. The spiritual ecstasy in which they (i.e., the saints) remained absorbed was inward (and had nothing to do with mere aesthetic delight).

Attains not one the status of a saint merely by following their external signs. Obtains spiritual good the individual who inwardly sees (the salvific) wisdom of saints. Some saints have revealed certain forms of devotional worship in accordance with the needs of time. (It is) the work of senses when hymn-singing is accompanied by music. There is the touch of divine ecstasy within every embodied existent. Thus real (spiritual) profit accrues to him who, through knowledge and meditation, at-

tempts to understand the inward voice. It is not from musical instruments from where flows (the stream of) hymns; (rather it is from the inner reservoir from where songs of praise come forth). Singing of any kind cannot be continuous, as fatigue is immediately experienced if singing is continued for one or two hours. Ceases not the cycle of birth and death unless the intellect sinks not deeply in the absorption of divine ecstasy which is inward. By establishing itself, through constant effort, in the tri-junctional point (between the eyebrows), the intellect thereby (is enabled) to have the knowledge of the Supreme Lord. Thus both restlessness and the fear of Time or Death is transcended as a consequence of fearless state. Dawns (upon the intellect) proper understanding concerning the glory of Guru (when the state of fearlessness is realised). It is true that saints often prescribe ordinary (spiritual) methods for people in general. (If followed properly), they will help them (towards things divine). It does not, however, mean that one should spend one's entire life in the study of the basics of spirituality. Attempt should be made for further (spiritual) advancement. For what have the saints composed (scriptures) like the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita, etc.? They have been (composed with the intention) that (people) may be inclined, through proper reflection, towards the path of righteousness.

Qs. Two forms of worship, sir, have been prescribed: indeterminate (nirguana) and determinate (saguna). May you kindly make us understand as to what (these forms of worship) really mean?

Ans. Determinate worship is characterised by an understanding in which God is seen as the doer, the cause behind every cosmic event, and the pervader over entire creation. (The worshipper of this way) worships Him by discovering his presence and glory in every particle of creation. (With such a disposition) do people, in accordance with their capacity, serve all living beings.

In so far as indeterminate worship is concerned, it consists in understanding Reality (i.e., Absolute) as non-active, relationsless and aloof. (With such a disposition) the practice of inward

contemplation is practised. Initially the indeterminate worship is somewhat difficult to practice. Easy it is to practice indeterminate form of worship who have climbed the ladder of determinate worship.

Qs. How far is idol-worship spiritually profitable?

Ans. The (basic spiritual) profit that (one) derives from idol-worship consists in inclining the dispositions towards the ideals of saintly life. The profit is of the same measure which a child derives from learning the alphabets. What people, on the contrary, do is to construct their own images of God. (This self-image of God) means that (man) himself is the creator of God. (In doing so) you forget the Lord who is within and who has given rise to the shape and form of the body you have. (This mis-identification of God) is called ignorance.

Worship the Transcendent Lord,
Who has formed this body,
Who has given life to the lifeless (body),
And from whose strength are all strengthened.

The Mystic Gayatri Mantra

Qs. Hindus not only rever Gayatri as a sacrament, but its mystic meditation also is prescribed. May you, sir, tell us as to why it is so?

Ans. Three kinds of statements are to be found in the Hindu scriptures (i) attractive, (ii) fearful, and (iii) realistic or factual. The (intention) of attractive statements is to attract people towards a wholesome life. (Thus) we are told that the mystical formula, if properly practised, would yield a particular result. The purpose of the second type of statement is the same (as is of attractive statements). The (fearful) statements are meant to create fear (in the hearts of people) so that wrong-doing may be avoided. Lastly, the factual statements are meant to describe the essential nature of Being. As far as the mystic formula of Gayatri is concerned, it is basically a prayer: "Bless us, O Lord, with pure intelligence, the Master of the three worlds." (This prayer) may be said to be attractive in so far as action and its fruit are concerned. (Thus) it is far better to meditate upon it than to idle away time. If the meaning of a *mantra* is deeply reflected upon, there will come a moment when the intellect by itself will attain to purity. (With a pure intellect) a step by step endeavour must be made (in order) to climb the ladder of righteous life. (Thus) both the moral defects as well as the modifications of the mind will be overcome. Finally, such an individual will (through Providence) meet his Guru who will reveal him the true path of the spirit. Thus shall (such a person) be called a true contemplative.

Good and Evil

Qs. Which sin, sir, may be said to be the most heinous?

Ans. That sin is most heinous which inflicts pain on others.

Qs. Which, sir, is the supreme good?

Ans. That is, indeed, supreme good which comforts the weary.

Qs. What are the determining marks for knowing good and evil?

Ans. The (determining mark) of good is its capacity to make inward life joyful and to fill the heart with (the throb) of life. Think that to be the evil (mark) of a deed which gives rise to (the states) of fear and anxiety.

Qs. Who, sir, is it who suffers from ill-treatment? Is it (the oppressor or the oppressed) who (suffer) from the impact (of ill-treatment)?

Ans. To the extent one harms the other, to that extent is the oppressor harmed (by his own evil deed). Remains one unharmed to the extent the other is not harmed. Before inflicting pain upon the other, the oppressor suffers the greatest (spiritual) loss by harming his own psychic apparatus. An evil-minded (person), indeed, is always in loss.

Qs. What (kind of) specific harm has an evil-minded person to undergo?

Ans. Evil deeds like clarified butter, as substitutes, enflame the flames of passion. From agitations suffers the mind when the fire of passion is enflamed (by evil deeds). Thus (the fire of passion) greatly harms the individual.

Pilgrimages

Qs. Do people (spiritually) fall or rise who make pilgrimages (to sacred places)?

Ans. Pilgrimage is good in so far as its touristic worth is concerned. Exists no more now the original meaning of, or the intention behind, the pilgrimage. The saints in ancient times lived mostly in places which have (now become) pilgrim spots. Whosoever would visit such a spot, would greatly be benefited. Such a spot or place is, indeed, sacred where a saint resides or has lived, or where holy discourses concerning God are delivered, or where the destitute and orphans are helped and served. (Think not) that to be a pilgrim spot where lot of water (in the form of lakes and rivers) is found.

The main purpose of pilgrimage is to create among general masses a sense of fellowship or oneness. It is at pilgrim spots where the saints (usually) give discourses on subjects which are wholesome and spiritually uplifting. (Thus do people profit) when they reflect correctly, or when they bathe in clean waters of the river, or when they visit the places of scenic beauty. The mind, thus, is filled with joy, and so accordingly the purpose of pilgrimage is fulfilled.

Qs. What, sir, is the meaning of sacred space?

Ans. The principle of "sacred space" has been explained in the *Samata Vilas*. You, therefore, are asked to reflect earnestly (over what has been said about the sacred space in the *Samata Vilas*). Think of that as an embodiment of sacrality which appeases the psychic apparatus.

The State of the Conditioned Existent

Qs. In the *Mahabharata* we are informed that the funeral rites of ancient times were well preserved (by the people) of that time. In the *Gita* we see Arjuna addressing Lord Krishna: Degenerate children would be born of women who would, on account of war, become widows. With coming into being of a morally degenerate society will also disappear the ancient funeral rites of the dead. May you, sir, clarify the heart of the matter!

Ans. It is believed that the *Mahabharata* text, during the reign of king Bhoja, consisted of ten thousand verses. The text, in its present form, has nearly one hundred thousand verses. From these (various interpolations and additions) it becomes quite clear that the real essence of the text has long ago vanished. The Brahmins have made various additions to the text with the intention of preserving their self-interest. (It also needs to be emphasised) that the people (of the *Mahabharata* times) were not (totally) free from the darkness of ignorance. Lord Krishna felt the need of imparting the knowledge, as contained in the *Gita*, to Arjuna in order that he may, by moving away from darkness, incline himself towards the illuminating light of the Spirit. Lord Krishna, in the *Gita*, says clearly: "The knowledge that I am imparting unto you, O Arjuna, is not new. In ancient times, too, this knowledge has been revealed by the Elders. As the world has forgotten this (ancient) knowledge, so I am imparting it unto you. Come, therefore, out from darkness, and listen to what I am

imparting unto you. (This knowledge) has always existed and will always exist. (This secret) knowledge, due to the circumstances of time, has disappeared, and so is accordingly being disclosed. (As there is dearth of knowledge), so both you and the people around you suffer from the darkness of ignorance. Although you (Arjuna) talk like a wise man, but what you say looks very unwise. You think about things that need not to be thought, and so you look like the learned." Lord Krishna discoursed on many (secret) topics.

Meaningless are the questions you (referring to the devotee) have raised concerning the funeral rites of the dead. Of four types are creatures who have their own corresponding realms of habitat. (The realms are): the nether realm, the realm of water, the earthly realm, and the atmospheric realm. However subtle the creature may be, he is dependent for his survival on any one of the realms. The departed ones have no significance apart these realms. Whatever Brahmins might have written concerning the dead, it is (all) imaginary.

Your parents are yours to the extent their perishable body last. (If you) serve them, while alive, you are offering them real worship. Comes to an end every form of relationship upon the cessation of the body.

The immortality of the individual lies in the fact that, upon death, it takes to another body (in accordance with his *karmian*). Who are, tell me, really dead? The creature (after death) takes to another body, and so accordingly enters into new relationships. As a wandering wanderer, the individual thus continues the cycle of births and deaths. Who can, therefore, be said to be dead? Try to understand (the process of continuous becoming) well.

Qs. What profit accrues to the one who performs the rites of the dead?

Ans. To perform funeral rites for the dead is not a righteous deed in itself. It is a way of remembering those who once were our own. By remembering the dead through acts of charity is not wrong in itself.

Qs. Do the dead profit in any way when the acts of charity are performed in their name?

Ans. Is the act of charity done in the name of the (dead) person or with some other purpose? is a question that needs to be probed.

(Answers the devotee): It is done in the name of the (dead) person.

In whose name? In the name of the body or of the individual being. (As body is the nameable entity), it is done in the name of the body.

(Continues Gurudeva): The body, when dead, is consigned to the flames of funeral pyre. (Once reduced to ashes), the body of five elements returns unto primordial condition. (In the absence of the body) in whose name must the acts of charity be performed? The offerings that are made (in memory of the dead) denote more a social binding than anything else. The ancient sages have given rise to this (social custom) with the intention that the deeds of charity may not vanish from society.

Qs. Does the individual (at the time of death) accrue any benefit from religious rites which his kith and kin perform?

Ans. As a businessman you are (in the habit) of talking in terms of profit (and loss). Whether someone is profited or not, (it matters little). (What matters) is that, on one pretext or the other, you are asked to perform the deeds of charity. The elders in the past might have thought that people in general hardly have the time to perform the deeds of charity, so let us bind them in terms of social obligation. (To fulfill the social obligations) people perform deeds of charity at fixed times (of the year). Whether the dead receive the offerings (is a question) which none can answer. It is true, however, that a good deed gives a good result. (The benefit of such religious rites is) that both the parents and grandparents are remembered as well as their day is celebrated in the same manner as people today celebrate their birthdays. Thus the days of the dead have been fixed. If the offering are

made during the first fortnight (after death), what shall happen to them for the rest of the year?

The Brahmins have invented new ways of deception. So one must make a proper use of intelligence. (Some of the ways of Brahmins) consists of astrology in terms of which destiny of a person is predicted.

Always try to understand that which is essential. Whatever deed, whether good or bad, one has done in life, the consequences of that deed will have to be reaped accordingly. Make it a habit to perform always the deeds of goodness. The real essence of the rites of dead lies in serving, with one's body and soul, the needy. Be pure of conduct. Eat simple food. Worship the Lord in accordance with the instructions of your Guru. Improve your lot for the good of the world.

Qs. Always remain we in doubt as to whether the dead are benefited by performing the rituals as divised by Brahmins. Is it possible for the dead to have his share from the ritual offerings?

Ans. Had not the Brahmins done what they have done, you people would have remained beyond the pale of social control. The creature upon death inherits the fruit of his deeds, and that is what he carries (as his treasure): Whatever is done in the name of the dead (like, helping the poor), the benefit of it goes to the one who does it. None can alter the destiny (of anyone), as each receives the reward in accordance with the deeds done. Determines each person his own destiny (for the future) either through righteous deeds, or through meditation and renunciation, or by inclining towards the Lord. Lives, indeed, he in darkness who thinks that, after death, his destiny will be determined by the children by performing religious rites. No spiritual good can be derived by offering the ritual cakes and flour. Departs he from the world as a noble person who, through selfless dedication, has served the poor and worshipped the Lord. Live not by trusting others. Depart from the world by doing deeds of goodness. As our life depends upon our understanding of the world, so

necessary it is that every (existential situation) must be analysed. (If you want) to serve the Brahmins, do it – and no one is stopping (you) from it. But allow not yourself to get buried under the layers of darkness. Deprived is the individual of peace who suffers from the delusions (of darkness). Free from the illusory delusions shall you be if you concentrate upon the Lord. Definitely shall he have the fruit of the deed who performs it. (As one determines one's own destiny), so how can you determine someone's fate? If you want to do good deeds like helping the poor – nobody is stopping you from doing such deeds. To say that such (good) deeds are performed for the good of the departed is the mark of ignorance. What the dead has done himself, is his and he will reap the fruit (of what he has done).

Believe in God alone. While doing good, move and live in the presence of the Divine Will. To become free from the wheel of illusions, or to determine one's destiny, the best and noble way is to serve the poor and remember the Lord. Thus be pure in your conduct and (business) transactions. Eat food which is simple and pure. Keep the company of the noble. Spend some time every day in the meditation of the Lord. If possible, help the poor in accordance with your capacity. No path is more noble (than the one just mentioned).

Qs. What is the proper way of determining (one's) destiny?

Ans. Noble shall be the destiny of the one who channelises properly his dispositions through self-exertion, meditation, proper reflection and conduct, who patterns his life-style in accordance with the lives of great men. Necessary also it is to see every event and deed in the light of Divine Will. Believe in God while doing good, and avoid that which is evil.

The Occult Forces

Qs. What do you, sir, think concerning (the existence or non-existence) of ghosts?

Ans. Imaginary are the tales people have woven concerning the existence of ghosts. No creature so far has come into being apart from the combination of five elements. A person of good dispositions is spoken of as goldy, whereas of evil tendencies is said to be demonic. This *faqir* (referring to himself) has been living for long in forests and cremation-grounds, which are fearsome. An imperfect individual alone becomes the victim of anxiety. Think, therefore, such thoughts alone which will enrich you (spiritually).

Qs. Is the assertion of some people correct who say that they can call the spirits of the dead and can communicate with them?

Ans. With what name are (these people) communicating with the spirits?? It is the body of five aggregates which alone can be named. The ghosts or what you call the self have no name (as they are formless). With what name shall the spirit be called upon the disappearance of the body? As beings (like spirits) are disembodied, the assertion of communicating with them is pure charlatanism. In order to make an easy living, the clever ones cheat the simple folk (by making such false assertions). In fact, no occult forces or beings exist.

Qs. What, sir, is the significance of demons, of magical formulas, of talismans, etc.?

Ans. All (what you said) is nothing but the fantasy of mind. In fact, no such beings like demons exist. It is the reflection of what the mind imagines. Of whatever kind imagination may rise in the mind, it projects itself as a reflection of imagination. When projected, the reflection becomes the cause of suffering. The existence of such beings is merely verbal (and not actual). As the spirit is (said to be) without a form or shape, (it cannot be named at all).

Unwholesome Speech

Qs. What is the nature of speech which is ill?

Ans. An ill speech is (always in the habit) of changing brass into gold and gold into brass. That speech may not be considered as unwholesome which affirms truth by negating untruth. It is in the court of saints and among the devotees of God where real and unreal are differentiated. (Think not) that to be an unwholesome discourse where (truth) is determined. It may, in conclusion, be said that that need not be considered an ill speech which says what is untruth (by differentiating it from truth). An ill speech, indeed, is that which tries to prove true to be false and false to be true.

Qs. Why is it, sir, that truth always sounds bitter?

Ans. Truth, indeed, is bitter. (Truth) becomes bitter if uttered in a straightforward fashion.

Qs. Is it not (morally reprehensible) to call a one-eyed person as a one-eyed person?

Ans. Who says that you should speak in such a manner when things can be worked out without such an utterance. Such an utterance needs, however, to be uttered where truth has to be established. Otherwise (direct) form of speech must be avoided.

Qs. What does this saying mean: "Perceive not even in dream the defect of others."

Ans. The saying (signifies) that even in dream the defect of others may not be entertained. Wrong, indeed, it is to find fault with others: whether the other be a thief or a person of evil disposition. A speech must not be viewed as unwholesome when it tries to distinguish the authentic from the inauthentic or true from false. Necessary it is to possess the sense of discrimination for differentiating the real from unreal.

Humility or the Disposition of Servanthood

Qs. (At the time of Annual Congregation at Jagadhari) the sense of humility and the disposition of service (among the congregants) that we witnessed seems to have flowed directly from you into them. What, sir, are the reasons for the disappearance (of humility among people these days)? May you, sir, throw some light on it.

Ans. There is lack of humility (among people these days) on account of the absence of spirituality. Due to the inward emptiness there is only external show. The matter, thus, is not very complex.

Qs. How shall it be known whether the inward (spiritual) state of them who serve is real or unreal?

Ans. Reflected is true spirituality of the servant of God when he is neither elated by joy nor depressed by criticism. Consider that to be untrue spirituality (which suffers from unevenness). The delight of humility shall be tasted by you only when you are humble. Although water comes down from the heights of mountain, and settles down in the plain, yet the height remains dry and waterless.

Qs. What is the way of remaining humble?

Ans. (To remain humble) means to be aware of the perishable nature of the body, which, in other words, means that it is both

momentary and transitory. How can you be proud of it (i.e., of the body)? And about whose dignity are you concerned with? Far better it is to reflect that countless people have come into the world and passed away. Arises the disposition of humility in the one who reflects in this manner.

Qs. How shall we come to know as to whether the spirit of humility exists within us or not?

Ans. Born is inwardly the disposition of humility when one firmly believes in what the saints have said, when the mind is truly attracted by the saints, when there is a complete merger in that what the saints have disclosed, and when one cares less and less about oneself. As the intellect of such a person becomes sharp, so in him arise such qualities (which determine humility). A person of such an intellect looks, with an eye which is subtle, both at defects and quality reflectively. Thus (a man of humility) endeavours to overcome moral imperfections. Remains deprived of the light of the Self the person who, even for a moment, is driven by the drives of the body. Whatever (religious acts) he may do externally, it is all for show. Arise interior poverty, humility, fearlessness when consciousness of the body disappears from the intellect.

Qs. Why, sir, are you making use of such vocabulary which reflects humility at the deepest level? Is it necessary (for you) to make use of such a vocabulary when you have attained the supreme spiritual state? The words of humility should rather be made use of by the seeker (than by you).

Ans. In so far as *This* (referring to himself) is concerned, there is nothing to be accounted. Reflect they the nature of *This* who love the Lord and believe in the right path. The cycle of birth and death (for *This*) ceased to be upon the revelation of the Divine Word (*verbum divinum*). Arises love for the Divine in the seeker upon hearing the words (of humility). Of supreme value it is to remain humble upon the attainment of highest spiritual state. It is only then that this (spiritual state) progressively becomes blissful.

Qs. What, sir, is the meaning of this saying: "The true mark of a saint or of a devotee is to respect the other by humbling himself?"

Ans. Detached as the saint is from the attachments of the body, so he accordingly lives in the state of selflessness. As the saint sees his own image in others, so he respects all creatures. Destroyed is the ego of the one who desires its destruction. In order to make a seeker a real server, the saints make use of the virtue of humility. Transcended is the dialect of ego and honour when the intellect is neither elated by joy nor depressed by sorrow.

The Causal effect of Fellowship

Qs. May you, sir, tell us as to how the effect (in the form of latent impression) of the deeds of past lives influences ones association in this life?

Ans. Put your question in understandable terms. What really do you want to know?

Qs. What I want to say is this: Man is in possession of both good and evil dispositions. There is all the possibility for a man of good dispositions to fall into the trap of evil association, whereas a man of evil dispositions may get a chance of associating himself with people who are righteous. The question now is: In what manner will the present association influence the inherited dispositions?

Ans. Greatly is one influenced by the association one associates with. Influenced are one's dispositions in terms of good or evil fruits by the corresponding association. Even though both kinds of tendencies may be found in man, he is, however, much more influenced, in the present state, by the association he maintains. What it means is that the inherited dispositions remain in the state of latency, whereas consciousness or mind is activated by the fresh and new impressions. As this physical body (of ours) cannot move without legs, so dispositionally oriented mind-body cannot move without the (support) of fresh impressions. The impressions manifest themselves when they are activated by

(new) associations. The dispositions of an evil person will definitely be frozen as and when he encounters a saint. The encounter with a saint will activate those latent impressions which are good and noble. Great, therefore, is the significance of fellowship. It is the kind of association that one keeps which either mars or drowns (spiritually) a man.

Indifference and Renunciation

Qs. What, sir, is indifference?

Ans. Comes into being indifference only when (the dispassion) of renunciation is realised. Arises the (unquenchable) thirst for the Lord when the links with the world are de-linked. It is (detachment) which is called indifference. Bears fruit indifference when the Lord's love is realised.

Qs. What is the essential nature of renunciation?

Ans. Experienced is renunciation when the intellect is free from all impurities. In other words, when the intellect understands the becoming-nature of the world, when it knows that all gross forms, including the body, are subject to change, and comprehends well that no material object has the power of bestowing true peace (then arises renunciation). (Also knows the man of renunciation that) each phenomenal object, on account of its inherent nature, is subject to origination and destruction.

Qs. What (forces) are responsible in giving birth to the disposition of renunciation?

Ans. A true renunciate is one who is ever ready to give up his personal comforts for the sake of others with an attitude of inner humility. The path of renunciation consists in viewing every form of service in the light of Divine Will. Destroyed are mental defects

with the growth in holy dispositions. Thus is the path of service followed (with an open mind). As a consequence (of this practice) the mind attains firm trust in the essential nature of Truth, and thereby indifference towards the objects of the world arises. This inclination (of indifference) denotes the opening up of devotional attitude (in the heart). By giving up the bodily comforts and by surrendering unto Divine Will, the individual thereby is ever ready to sacrifice himself, without any motive, for the good of the other. Such a noble soul alone is the proper claimant for the bliss of the Self.

Qs. With what method can the disposition of renunciation be attained?

Ans. The disposition of renunciation will arise within by itself the moment unshakeable trust in the words of Guru take root in the mind. Consider the words of your Guru as the main source of nourishment for your mental faculties. Comprehend the words of The Guru in the same manner as the noble ones extract essence from (what they hear from their Guru). One must always visit the saints with the intention of deriving maximum spiritual benefit, and only then the spiritual summit can be reached.

One may not be as fortunate as to have cool water from a brook (during summer). Even if cool breeze may not be available, one has at least the satisfaction of experiencing the repose of mind during the time of stay at the stream. (If daily visited), a day will come when all the qualities of the stream will be at your disposal. Whether one is (immediately) benefited or not, it is, however, necessary (for one's good) to cultivate the fellowship of saints. A day will come when good will accrue (from such a fellowship). Definitely shall you be uplifted spiritually when the grace of saints shall descends upon you. The condition, however, is: Be of right disposition and be always fearless. (Thus) shall you be free from all afflictions.

Qs. How, sir, shall the state of dispassion be strengthened?

Ans. At that moment does the individual being endeavour to incline himself towards the (transcendent) Name when the phenomenal categories are transcended. Affirmed is the rupture with the phenomenal world when one is completely inclined towards the Name. One must, therefore, try to understand the real condition of the world through the fellowship of saints. (Thus) arises the discriminatory understanding, and thereby disposition towards the Name is strengthened. (With such an understanding and disposition) does dispassion become firm.

An Analysis of the Gita and other Scriptures

Qs. What, sir, do you think about the knowledge which Krishna imparted to Arjuna and which is to be found in the Gita of Vyasa?

Ans. The *Gita* is such an exalted religious text in which the entire philosophy of matter and spirit is explained in clear terms.

Qs. Krishna, the Lord of Yogis, says unto Arjuna: "Obtain true knowledge they who are true devotees." Can you tell us what is true devotion about which Lord Krishna is speaking? The kind of blind devotion that is prevalent these days (among people) is destroying the vitals of our country. (This form of devotion) has made people slothful and lazy. It seems that the Lord was speaking of a different kind of *bhakti* (than the one we are witnessing at present).

Ans. You are right in asserting that Lord Krishna is indicating about a different kind of *bhakti*. What the scriptures have said concerning devotion is being misinterpreted and misused these days. Listen carefully, and try to understand what is being said. *This* does not speak about things which *This* has not known. *This*, before anything else, experiments with his own being. If the quality of the experiment is upto the mark, *This* shares (the result) with others for their good.

Deceptive is this world, as it changes its colours constantly.

Thus are creatures deceived (by the world). This Magician who plays this magic (of deception) is real, as he remains constant through all the periods of time. True faith is said to be that in the light of which reality of Magician, and the unreality of magic, is perceived. This ever-changing creation of the Lord is incomprehensible. As ever-changing, the world is not self-existent. The Substratum alone has the power of dissolving (the creation). Let us take this body (of ours) as an illustration. The body is alive because of consciousness. Although consciousness is within the body, it is different from it. Whether the body lives for ten days, ten years, or ten thousand years, the principle of awareness (i.e., consciousness) remains ever the same. Each and every moment does the body undergo change and destruction. Although the body undergoes hundreds of dissolutions every moment, the principle of awareness within it, however, suffers from no change. He alone is the right claimant for Transcendent knowledge who knows that (matter suffers from change and consciousness does not). Look the men of faith at the world in the same manner as did Raja Merudhwaj, Harishchandra, or the two young sons of Guru Govind Singh who were buried alive. Look at the world as an awakened person. To attain faith is not a play of children. (To have faith means) to die while alive. Although the path is difficult, yet one should not be afraid of it. Every (hardship) becomes easeful if one has the will to act.

Qs. Difficult it is to understand as to whether Lord Krishna imparted to Arjuna the entire knowledge (that is contained in the Gita) when the two armies were ready to fight a battle?

Ans. You are right what you say. There was not much time for such a long discourse. He made use of few words with the intention of removing doubts from the mind of Arjuna. Vyasa later on expanded the core of the knowledge in the text called the *Bhagvadgita*.

Qs. In the Gita Lord Krishna says that they who depart from the world by uttering *om* attain Me. If this be the case, what then is the point in following the spiritual path for entire life?

Ans. The concern of Lord Krishna is with the essence of the Word, namely, *om*. It is not possible, at the time of death, to be inclined towards the Transcendent if the Word is not experienced.

Qs. How is it possible to attain the same knowledge which Lord Krishna revealed?

Ans. What Lord Krishna has said for the present, listen to that.

Qs. In the 12th chapter of the Gita Lord Krishna says that the seeker, at the initial stage of spiritual praxis, encounters a number of hardships on account of body-consciousness. Kindly tell us as to what constitute the formal and non-formal (forms) of worship?

Ans. Formal (form of) worship consists in thinking of the Lord as omnipresent, as dwelling in the hearts of all, and in serving all creatures on account of knowing that the Lord lives in all of them. That worship is non-formal in which the world is seen illusory and liable to destruction. Initially difficult it is to practice non-formal (form of) worship. With ease does one step into formless worship upon attaining perfection in formal form of worship.

Qs. What, sir, is the meaning of (the following) words which Lord Krishna addressed to Arjuna: "Acceptable, O Arjuna, is to Me even a leaf, a flower, a fruit if offered with devotion!"

Ans. These words of Lord Krishna denote that even a man of little devotion (has the possibility) of attaining the supreme state.

Qs. What do you think about the views concerning Durga that have been expressed in the *Durgabhagvat*?

Ans. In ancient times it was a way of explaining (reality), which later on the men of greed made use of (this method) as a means of earning their livelihood by weaving the tales of imagination. The depiction of Durga in the *Durgabhagvat* as riding a lion or possessing numerous arms means that the ego, which rides (the

mind-like) lion, can be slain by numberless arms (which symbolise Divine grace).

Qs. Lord Krishna refers, to himself as God. He has always identified himself with the Supreme Reality. No holy person so far has spoken of himself as God. Always have they pointed out the way towards the Self. How shall we trust this assertion of Krishna?

Ans. The (spiritual) state of Krishna can be known only upon attaining it. This secret gnosis is beyond the ken of worldly people like you. The salvific knowledge is beyond (that empirical knowledge) which affirms nothing. The (empiricists) or the sensualists have depicted Krishna (in worldly terms). Incline yourself towards that redemptory knowledge which (Krishna) has revealed. The men of the world (that is, house-holders) can never be able to reveal this (secret) gnosis.

Qs. Is it, sir, possible to attain to the state of Krishna?

Ans. Yes, indeed! Krishna (had reached the ultimate state whereby) he was able to know his essential nature. You, too, shall be like unto Krishna when you will come to know your essential nature. (At this stage of spirituality) you are unable to know your essential nature. For you, at this stage (of spiritual development), the question of attaining the state of Krishna does not arise.

Qs. Greatly has Mother Ganga been praised in the holy scriptures. Can you kindly make us understand as to why this praise has been (showered) upon her?

Ans. What the ancients have (actually) disclosed is no more extant (in written or oral form). (These days) the motivated people, for their self-sustenance, have woven imaginary tales (concerning Reality). Attained is the Imperishable Word and subdued are the tendencies of mind when the knowing intellect experiences the ultimate Energetic Power which illumines this body (of ours) by descending from the Sky of Consciousness (i.e., from head) downwards. This flow of the interior Word (i.e., of the Energetic

Power) is spoken of as Ganga. Obtain, indeed, release from bondage they who bathe (in the waters of Ganga). Bathe in (the Ganga) if you can!

Qs. How do you view the legend of the churning of ocean by both demons and gods?

Ans. This story needs to be interpreted (in symbolic terms). By churning the ocean of this belly through (the practice) of *prana* and *apana* (i.e., *pranayama*), one can discover (spiritual) jewels within. (As far as the symbolism of demons and gods is concerned), it means that both such tendencies (i.e., demonic and godly) are to be found within man. It is (by shaking both these forces) that the churning of the ocean (within) takes place.

Qs. (In ancient times) both the go-medha and ashva-medha sacrifices were offered, and both forms of sacrifices are greatly valued by the scriptures. How could such (expensive) sacrifices be performed by common people when kings alone could afford them?

Ans. All this (what you have said) is false. What the sages intended has been (through the passage of time) transformed into falsehood. The real meaning of sacrifice is contained in renunciation. The *go-medha* and *ashva-medha* sacrifices, in fact, mean the renunciation of all sense-related (desires) and (total) control over (the functions) of *prana* respectively.

Qs. Mention of the messengers of Vishnu and Yama has been made in the Scriptures. Can you, sir, tell us something about them?

Ans. The ancient texts have made use of metaphor to explain (the abstruse) spiritual knowledge. (Thus) the godly (mental) tendencies denote the messengers of Vishnu, whereas the ungodly ones symbolise the messengers of Death.

Qs. Such great and perfect saints like Shiva, Parasara, Vishawamitra, Narada, Brahma, Macchanda, have suc-

cumbed to lust. Can you tell us the reasons for it?

Ans. (What you have said) is not applicable to them who are spiritually perfect; it is applicable to them who are imperfectly perfect. Self-controlled (*brahmachari*) is he who sees the destruction of the body and whose intellect looks at itself as separate from the body. Even for such a (perfect) person necessary it is to maintain certain norms in food and conduct. While having this body, (the perfect ones) must remain aware of (bodily) temptations.

Qs. **In the Yogavasistha prediction about the incarnation of Lord Krishna has been made as well as about his teachings (as contained) in the Gita. Can great men, like Vasistha, make such prophecies?**

Ans. Comes one to know that these ideas (as expressed by you) are attractive when reflected upon. (After reflection) these ideas are written down (in texts). It is true that men of God, like Christ, Moses, Abraham, Muhammed, Buddha, Mahavira, are born everywhere. As far as the prediction concerning their birth is concerned, it is nowhere made. Have not these great saints (of other countries) sacrificed their lives (for the good of people)? Is the ultimate state of spirituality only experienced in India and by Indians? Nothing much (in the scriptures) has been said about the great men of other countries. As far as the cult of Rama or Krishna is concerned, it owes its existence to such *acaryas* who wanted to preach the religion of devotion. For the knowers of the Self there exist no limitations of country, time-space or of causal nature. (The state of the Self) is formless and all-knowing. (It is a state) free from the past and future events. This gross phenomenality is nothing but the puzzle of three innate characteristics (i.e., of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*). The knowers of the Self say nothing about it. Continues the cycle of rise and fall of creation when the innate attributes (of Nature) disturb (the repose) of each other. (Thus) nothing final can be said about the innate attributes (of Nature). Possible it is to say something about the marks (of Nature) if one reflects over them and that is all.

Qs. What meaning do the Enlightened ones ascribe to the Vedantic theory of five aggregates and to the twenty-five realms of Nature? May you kindly explain it to us.

Ans. The five aggregates (which compose the world) are: space, air, fire, water and earth. Each aggregate expresses itself in five different ways. Arise from (the element) of space (the dispositions of) sorrow, attachment, shame, fear, etc. From the element air arise contraction, obstinacy, expansion, speed, etc. From the (element) fire arise hunger, thirst, sleep, sloth, etc. From the element (water) arise blood, sperm, sputum, sweat, and the nasal flow. From the (element) earth arise skin, hair, flesh, bones, etc. Thus this body of ours is composed of five elements, and at the subtle level each element represents five tendencies. (Together they form twenty-five realms of Nature).

Qs. In the scriptures it is said that the yogis, who may have strayed away from the Path, are born (upon death) in families which are good and honourable. Why is it that such yogis are never influenced by the moral defects (if any) of the families in which they are born? What, above all, does the expression: the family of the learned - mean?

Ans. (Upon a new birth) the non-perfect yogi does not allow such defects to influence him which he may find in the family. Instead he endeavours to overcome (the moral defects) by cultivating seriousness of purpose. Thus the birth of all great men - like Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Mahavira - has occurred in this manner. Once enlightened, they remain absorbed in the ultimate spiritual state. Even though born in royal families, they (are able to) attain the supreme knowledge of (the Self).

The family of the learned may not be rich in wealth; they are perfect and noble in their conduct and deed. (Being perfect), the people of such families possess supreme ideals of life and are pure in conduct. An imperfect yogi, when born in such a family, rises higher and higher spiritually, as he is in possession of the melieu (which is conducive for spiritual growth).

Qs. you, sir, prohibit the use of intoxicants, but we know that Lord Shiva makes use of (such intoxicants) as, for instance, hemp. Even society in general does not seem to be prohibiting the use of intoxicants. But why, then, you are not allowing their use?

Ans. While mentioning the name of Shiva, you are thereby polluting the intellect of people. Has anyone seen Shiva smoking charas? (Instead of smoking charas), (we always see Shiva) absorbed in the deep meditation of divine Name. Destroyed, indeed, are they themselves (both spiritually and physically) who are making use of intoxicants for the purpose of ecstasy. (In this way) they are also destroying the lives of ordinary people. Shunned should be such a teacher who asks his disciples to take intoxicants (for inducing mental absorption). No spiritual good is to be found in the intoxicants, as their use does not lead (at all) to concentration. Sets slumber and sloth in the intellect of the one who makes use of them. How can such (an unwholesome) person be inclined towards spiritual practice. Subtle of intellect alone are inclined towards that which is spiritually good. Real cheat is he who asserts that the use of intoxicants terminates in mental concentration. Free yourself from janus-faced (mental) impurities. Acquire the divine quality of simplicity by being simple in your food habits. How can such food or drink be the cause of repose which gives rise to both the mental and physical affliction? No real joy can be derived from that which afflicts both mind and body with pain. Thus must one avoid the use of such stuff (which causes pain and mental disturbance).

Qs. Is Vedanta responsible in making people lazy and passive?

Ans. Vedantic (philosophy) does not make people into slothful or passive (creatures); rather it transforms them into fearless and compassionate (beings). It is theoretical, (and not practical), Vedanta which gives rise to what is called affliction. Worth of reflection is the assertion that the teachers of Vedanta not only teach (the theoretical) Vedanta. They, indeed, should be considered as cowards who merely talk (about Vedanta), but practice it not (in life). As there are so many aspects of Vedanta, it is only

few fortunate ones alone who are blessed with the (ultimate) experience (of Vedantic truths). Know they not the depth of Vedanta who assert that it makes people into passive creatures. They who merely spin theoretical Vedanta are neither of this world nor of the next. Such Vedantins are (spiritual) cheats. (As cheats), they cause destruction (in society).. Rightly reflect they upon Vedanta who are blessed with selflessness. In them arises the disposition of *bhakti*.

Qs. (There is a view) that God is properly known if the respective powers (of creation, preservation and destruction) of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahisa are understood. How do you, sir, view this viewpoint?

Ans. Eight are the elements which conjointly determine the functioning of Nature. And they (i.e., the elements) are (earth, water, fire, air, and space) and three (innate) qualities (of elements): (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamhs*). That which is noble represents the nature of Vishnu, that which is energetic represents the nature of Brahma, and that which is destructive represents Mahisa.

Some Reflection about the Personal Life of Gurudeva

Qs. As you, sir, seem to be not taking proper care of your body, is it a right attitude? Why are you doing such an injustice (to your body)? What harm has this body done unto you (that you are punishing it in such a manner)? Body, too, is in need of care and rest.

Ans. *This* (referring to himself) takes rest for an hour, and it is sufficient for the relaxation of the body.

Qs. At what time you begin your spiritual praxis, as I do not want to be an obstruction in your worship.

Ans. Transformed is the own-being of *faqirs* into what may be called divine melody or song (*bhajan*). Thus *faqirs* have no time for formal forms of worship, (as their very life is itself a form of worship). Let the point be illustrated. Worship is like a man who wants to acquire wealth. The very means (for acquiring wealth) are seen as a form of (formal) worship till the time of its acquirement. Upon its attainment, however, means are no more treated as a form of worship. Instead concentration is focussed towards the safety of the wealth that has been acquired. As man is more concerned about the safety (of his wealth), he no more sees means as a form of worship. The same is the case with *faqirs*.

Qs. You, sir, seem to be visiting always such fearful and lonely forests which are full of dangerous animals. Are you not afraid of animals like lion, snake, bear, etc.?

Ans. The animals always sit close to *This*. *This* has never encountered any fearful object or creature. Once a terrible event took place in Gangothian (now in Pakistan). One day *This* left the house very early. As the clouds had spread over the sky like a thick sheet, *This*, thus, could not know the exact time of the day. (When in the solitude of the forest) *This* began to meditate on a slab. When *This* opened the eyes in the morning, *This* found a snake near the stone. (Wonder of wonders) the snake, too, opened its eyes, and ran away.

Qs. Why is it, sir, that we always experience fear during the night (particularly in a forest)? Why is it that the fear of animals sends shivers down the spine?

Ans. Every creature, whatever its state or form, is always in the state of fear. (This fear) exists on account of the existence of the same life-force in all creatures. Thus an identical kind of disposition is found among creatures when confronted by similar situations. If you consider (a particular) creature an enemy, there will arise similar disposition in the creature towards you. Negative dispositions towards the other cease to be upon knowing that it is one and the same life-force which exists in all beings. One sees *that* in the other which the mind projects.

Qs. As you are not an expert in empirical forms of knowledge, how is it, sir, that you are making use of technical words in Hindi?

Ans. Upon the attainment of transparent purity of mind the sources of knowledge are opened (with felicity). *This* has not so far been given the permission of making use of words which are difficult or abstruse. A single point or theme is being interpreted from several angles with the intention that men of low intelligence may grasp what is being explained. Whatever (*This*) discloses unto you, it is done in accordance with Will Divine. You must be

serious of that which is being revealed unto you. As far as the attainment of Supreme Spiritual state is concerned, it shall be your concern at a later stage. Necessary it is for you (at this stage of development) to think over such thoughts which will help you in the practice of divine Name. So tight is the grip of attachment that man, even after understanding its nature, is unable to free himself from it. It is as a doer that man remains bound to the cycle of desires. Thus reaps he (as a doer) the fruit of his deeds, and thereby suffers from the dialectic of attachment and envy. Difficult it is to break up the chain of doership. (They alone can break the chain of doership) who follow the path of interior poverty as pointed out by the sages. (Such men), upon knowing the momentary character of life, become detached. Thus the seeker, by walking upon the path of truth, attains freedom both from doership and from the cycle of birth and death.

Qs. From birth does man possess some understanding concerning truth. Is it possible for man to walk upon the path of truth in this life if in previous existence he has repented over his sins?

Ans. Spirituality is not a matter that can be (known or practised) during the period of one existence. *This*, no doubt, could understand, from the age of four, (certain)) secret spiritual themes. So (*This*) had the experience of spiritual ecstasy (from very early childhood). Even, then, difficult it was to understand or grasp the (inner) content of spirituality. As *This* was a mere child when spiritual secrets were revealed, it was difficult to comprehend that which was being disclosed. Thus time had to pass on. Upon the arrival of youth the inclination towards (spirituality) became much more deep. (At this stage) exteriorly thought *This* that there should be no total dissociation with the people. *This* would go to places of solitude for meditation as and when time became available. (It must however be noted) that there is nothing common between the *faqirs* and the men of the world.

Qs. Why have you, sir, renounced the eating of solid forms of food? What we have only read in the scriptures is now being witnessed by us directly. How is it possible to remain alive

without having any solid intake (for the sustenance of the body)?

Ans. It is none of your concern (as to why *This* does not take any solid food). Ask such questions which are directly related to you. How can you understand it (i.e., as to why *This* has stopped eating of food) when (the question) concerns the supreme spiritual state? When you will, through intense practice, attain this state of spirit, the secret shall be disclosed unto you. Ask such (questions) which are both relevant and topical. In him cease thirst and hunger who has the experience of sorrow or who is elated by spiritual joy. Why should they be worried about worldly things who are blessed with inward joy? Whatever little *this* takes in the form of tea or milk, it is for the purpose of oiling the machine, namely, the body. *This* has (reached the stage) where neither association nor dissociation mean anything. It is the salvific Word of the Guru which is food for *This*.

Qs. Do you believe in (the divinity) of Rama?

Ans. *This* believes in the Supreme Lord in whom Rama believed and about whom Lord Krishna spoke in the *Gita*.

Qs. Are you a dualist or non-dualist?

Ans. Sit down! *This* sees unity in diversity and diversity in unity. Inclined will be the intellect towards sameness or oneness when both the conditions (i.e., of unity and diversity) are seen to be identical.

Qs. Why are you not fond of self-portraits?

Ans. Real is not the essence of the object which is perceived by the eye. The form of a body (or of an object) is constituted by five elements. That, indeed, is your empirical nature which is reflected by the state of your knowledge, by your dispositions or thoughts. How foolish it is to think that to be real essence which, in fact, is unreal! A thief does not possess a different kind of body than the one you have. The essence of thievery, however, is to be

found in the kind of thoughts he entertains or the disposition he projects. (As his nature is characterised by thievery), so he is called a thief. From this it is quite clear that it is one's dispositions or thoughts which reflect one's nature rather than the physical body of five elements. It is of this body of which pictures are made. Instead of disclosing reality, portraits simply mislead (by making one believe) in the unreal as real.

Qs. You seem never to be feeling thirsty? Is it true that you never drink water?

Ans. You know that Ganga flows out from the *jata* of Shivaji. The water of (Ganga) quenches the thirst of all creatures. Will not, then, inward Ganga quench the thirst of *This*?

Prescription for Success

Qs. What is the main prescription by the use of which one may reach the (final) goal whether worldly or supernal?

Ans. Before setting out towards the goal, necessary it is to determine the goal with firm determination. (Upon determining the goal) should one endeavour for its attainment in a realistic manner. It is only then that the right result is obtained. Determining the (existential) goal means that, before taking the task in hand, one must understand the pros and cons of the problem properly. Every angle of the problem, in accordance with one's capacity, must begin only (when the problem has been examined thoroughly). The firmness of the will must be such that the task must be accomplished at its appointed time, which, in other words, means that the goal must be realistic. Thus have rightly the Elders said that the goal is reached if the effort is realistic as well as firm. Completed is the task even before its appointed time when the will is realistic. Whether the goal is worldly or supernal, the seekers have an ambition of reaching the goal. It is the ambitious individual alone who sets his heart to the task which he undertakes, and so (rests not) till its completion.

Qs. Is it necessary to keep certain considerations (in mind) for the successful completion of the task which one undertakes?

Ans. (The special consideration) is nothing but firm resolution. Without a (resolute mind) no task can be completed.

Qs. May you kindly explain it at length!

Ans. Within you will arise humility when the fear (of Lord) seizes you. With respect will you look towards that which you fear. Faith will arise within you when blessed will you be by the object you fear. Thus shall you be blessed spiritually.

Reflection Concerning Women

Qs. What are the duties which mothers are expected to fulfill?

Ans. They must necessarily possess the spirit of simplicity and of service. They must never ask their servants to prepare or serve food. They must accomplish these tasks by themselves. They must pay special attention towards the building of moral character of their children.

Qs. As women, during the period of menstruation, are unable to keep themselves clean, how can they (during this period) engage themselves in the practice of the remembrance of divine Name?

Ans. It is not merely by washing hands and feet that the discipline of purity can be maintained. She can (if she so desires) put her mind in the practice of meditation even when she cooks food. Give up (all unnecessary) superstitions! Does not she eat food during her monthly periods? Which task does she not undertake (during this period)? While cooking food, she must maintain both external and internal purity. (During this period) she must undertake heavy tasks at a low speed. She can (during this period) practice the remembrance of divine Name much more intensely.

Qs. The idea that (women are unclean during their menstrual period) gives rise to many doubts in the mind. Why is it so, sir?

Ans. Nothing by nature is inherently pure or impure. (The question of purity) must not be seen in terms of maleness or femaleness. (This, however, is definite) that what one sows, that shall he definitely reap. (Women/like) Gargi, sita, Savitri, etc. - all of them practised the meditation of divine Name. They attained the supreme spiritual state on account of their praxis. The femaleness of a woman reflects her nature, which is that of service. Woman remains, from childhood to the end of her life, engaged in the service of others. The main defect that one finds in women is that they waste their precious time in speaking ill of others. Otherwise women will surpass even saints in holiness if they remain firm in the practice of the Name. May God bless them with right intelligence. May they remain within the bounds of tradition. Difficult it is for them to remain within the bounds of tradition apart from the practice of divine Name and of right fellowship. That (woman) is the mother of the world whose mind is inclined towards the Name, service (of others), and right fellowship. As woman is also the concrete expression of *maya* (i.e., of illusory power), it is Lord alone who can protect us from her. Women worry much about the worldly things on account of their *maya*-nature. Makes that woman righteous the family members of her husband who, in childhood, receives righteous *samskaras* from her parents. It is the nature of dispositions which determines the nature of relationships. Wastes the woman her life in the filth of moral depravity who (is immoral). Few blessed women alone are there who are inclined towards the righteous path. Although in our country women are much inclined towards religion, yet all their (religiosity) is magical in nature. Never do women (of our country) visit temples or gurdwaras, saints or *faqirs*, without selfish motives. For this reason few among them attain the state of perfection. (Most) women do not desire to hurt (someone) deliberately, as it is their innate nature to be helpful.

Qs. Why, sir, are you not initiating women?

Ans. Are you not aware (of the fact) that women suffer from the ill (disposition) of worldly attachment? Unable are (most) women to achieve anything (definite) on account of their unstable mind.

Much of their running after saints is motivated by their disposition of greed. As most of their time is consumed by the household tasks, so few among them become the seekers of truth. From morning to evening are women engaged in various household tasks -- sick have to be looked after, children have to be given a bath, milk has to be brought (from the shop), etc. Although filled with the spirit of service and faith, even then they are unable to free themselves from the illusory power of *maya*. Deeply ingrained in them is the sense of attachment. On account of attachment is the expansion of the projected world given rise to. Suffer (such) women from the lack of reflection who remain subject to the ill of attachment. (So unstable of mind are women) that turn they towards that immediately which has a magical look. It is the women of Supreme wisdom who have become like unto Savitri, Anusuya, Sita, Mira, etc. Even though (most women suffer from moral lacks), it is they who have given birth to sages and saints.

Qs. Why, sir, do women suffer from restlessness?

Ans. (It is said) that women, to a great extent, have the nature of moon. As the moon waxes and wanes, so is the character of women. (It is never stable), as it changes from moment to moment. Difficult it is for women to exist without depending on someone. (It is also their nature) to surpass others when engaged in the purification of dispositions. Rabiya of the Arab world was one such woman of such high spiritual state. She would complete the task to perfection which she would undertake. Woman may be said to be a mixture of inward courage, contentment, trust, of excessive desires, greed, shame, mercy, attachment, etc. Thus (the character of a woman) is both constant and weak. Betwixted are men by both the laughter and tears of woman. Having a janus-faced nature, women perform wholesome and unwholesome deeds.

Qs. Is it not proper to allow women to approach you for the purpose of overcoming their doubts?

Ans. As and when there is open fellowship, woman as mothers are allowed to participate in it. If a mother is desirous of visiting

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This, she must come either with her husband or with someone who is closely related to her. Mothers are not allowed (to visit *This* alone), as it is not (morally) right and proper. Remember (this) that women reflect the nature of *maya*. It is possible for a man to live alone in a forest; but is it so with a woman? Always are (women) in danger of a moral fall.

Right Conducts

Q. What constitutes right conduct?

A. It is opposed to the wrong which is the opposite of right. Right conduct is that which is morally right and proper. It is the conduct which is in accordance with the law of God and the law of man. It is the conduct which is in accordance with the law of nature and the law of society. It is the conduct which is in accordance with the law of God, the law of man, the law of nature, and the law of society.

Q. What are the principles of right conduct?

A. Right conduct is based on the principles of truth, justice, and love. It is the conduct which is in accordance with these principles. It is the conduct which is in accordance with the law of God, the law of man, the law of nature, and the law of society.

Q. What are the duties of a person of right conduct?

A. A person of right conduct has the duty to be true, just, and loving. He has the duty to be honest, to be fair, and to be kind. He has the duty to be self-controlled, to be self-reliant, and to be self-sufficient.

Q. What are the fruits of right conduct?

A. The fruits of right conduct are peace, happiness, and health. It is the conduct which leads to these fruits. It is the conduct which is in accordance with the law of God, the law of man, the law of nature, and the law of society.

Q. What are the signs of right conduct?

A. The signs of right conduct are a clear conscience, a peaceful mind, and a healthy body. It is the conduct which leads to these signs. It is the conduct which is in accordance with the law of God, the law of man, the law of nature, and the law of society.

Right Conducts

Qs. What constitutes right conduct?

Ans. To be disposed towards the Divine is itself the reflection of right conduct. Right conduct, which means the cultivation of that which is (morally) true, can be rightly practised if one is firmly inclined towards the Lord, and so accordingly looks at the world as a trap of illusion. Remember, therefore, the Lord much more passionately and spend your time in the meditation of divine Name.

Qs. What necessary ingredients are needed in the practice of righteous conduct?

Ans. Difficult, indeed, it is to be righteous during these days of amorality. Upon attaining righteous disposition shall you gain access to the Self. Righteous shall (definitely) be the life if attention is paid to the following points:

1. Be simple in life, and natural in habits.
2. Keep yourself away from intoxicants or from places of entertainment. Both of them give rise to impurities and restlessness of mind.
3. Dissociate from them who are unrighteous.
4. Cultivate the fellowship of the noble ones. Matters it little as to whether you understand or not what they say, as a day will come when the doors of understanding will be opened up. Towards right direction is one influenced by the righteous fellowship.
5. Renounce the methods of cheating or doubleness. Be

simple and cheat no more. You shall (accordingly) be free
from (all) afflictions. And as a consequence (of such a life)
blessed shall you be with supreme peace.

Questions Concerning Different Topics

Qs. Suppose a man has a life-span of eighty years, and out of it sixty have gone by. And What remains are twenty years. Is it possible for man (during the years that are left) to think that he has (one day) to die while at the same time to remain engaged in the activities of the world for the sake of life itself? Death will come one day - and this fact cannot be doubted. Will not it cause, however, the downfall of man to think about death constantly? What, sir, do you think about it?

Ans. What you say seems to be correct for the worldly people. They (i.e., the worldly ones) need not concern themselves with death. Arises the thought of death when some loved one passes away, and so accordingly is experienced, for few moments, the dark clouds of death. Forgotten is the reality of death with the passage of time. So death is seen (due to forgetfulness) as insubstantial as a dream. With the arising of noble dispositions the seekers (of Reality) ponder over death. Perceive (the reality) of death constantly they whose intellect remains firmly rooted in true faith.

Qs. What (kind of) offerings should be made when visiting a *faqir*?

Ans. For a *faqir* the worldly objects hold no attraction. The relationship which the *faqir* has with his disciple is of the nature of spirit.

The *faqirs* look at the entire creation as the expression of the Self. If inwardly you ever experience an unwholesome disposition or thought, offer it to a *faqir*. It is this kind of offering which the saints desire from their disciples.

Qs. What is (the nature) of the gift (of grace) of a *faqir*?

Ans. (What has been said above) may equally be said about the *faqir's* gift of grace. Take that to be (the true) gift of a *faqir* which restores peace, contentment and righteous disposition and which illumines the existence (with light divine)

Qs. How many kinds of *faqirs* are there?

Ans. *Faqirs* are of three types: ecstasies, mad and sensible. Ecstasies (remain absorbed in their ecstasy), and so keep no relationship with anyone. As they keep to themselves, they, thus, neither converse with, nor hear from, anyone. So absorbed are they in their ecstasy that oblivious are they of the place (of residence) as well as of the (existence of their) body.

The second type of *faqirs* are so inebriated with divine love that people consider them to be mad. Inwardly, however, they are reflective and serious. The *faqir* of this kind adopts the way of (divine madness) to keep (himself) away the people.

The third type of *faqir*, namely, the sensible, imparts the divine knowledge to people for their good. Knowing that life is short and transitory, so the idea of the good of people always remains uppermost in his mind.

Qs. Is Bharatrihari still alive?

Ans. The world (we live in) is never bereft of men of good will. There are many saints who, on account of their will-power, still live in their subtle bodies. As and when they (i.e., the saints) may desire, they can appear or disappear. Mostly such saints spend their time in contemplative absorption.

Qs. Are such persons entitled to sainthood who, while having attained the state of an *avadhuta*, make use of their supernal powers?

Ans. A (true) *avadhuta* keeps himself away from the worldly people. Far better does an *avadhuta* think it to remain immersed in bliss (divine) than (to get engaged in the activities of the world). Filled are the worldly people with greed and selfish motives. Fulfilled are unintended desires of them who approach saints (like *avadhuta*) with a mind that is pure and true. Deliberately make *avadhuta* use of uncultured language with the intention that they may no more be considered as holy and sanctified. Thus shall (people) leave them alone and undisturbed. Very few people, due to fear, approach an *avadhuta*. The (spiritual) state of an *avadhuta* is that of homogeneous disposition, and so accordingly reflects the condition of the (inward) bliss. No spiritual benefit is derived by people from such (kind of) saints. The *avadhuta* neither shows the path of righteousness nor does anyone understand his discourse.

Qs. (From a Muslim devotee): What, sir, do you think of uttering the holy words (during the time) of slaughtering an animal?

Ans. Written is it in the holy *Quran* that divine words may be uttered only when freedom from desires and (from the disposition of) cruelty is obtained. (The Muslim devotee agreed to what Gurudeva said). (Another devotee asked Gurudeva): Is it possible for butchers to be free from desires and from the disposition of cruelty? (Answers Gurudeva): What is the divine formula (used at the time of slaughtering animals)? The divine formula, for the first time, was uttered by Abraham at the time when he offered his son as a sacrificial victim (unto God). Such a soul, indeed, is free from both desires and from the disposition of cruelty. It is such souls alone who can utter the divine formula.

Qs. By what method can we know our inward deficiencies?

Ans. Suffer they from inward deficiencies who cultivate not the following five moral principles: simplicity, truthfulness, ser-

vice, fellowship of the righteous, and true recollection. Associate not yourself with people of low intelligence upon coming to know that no inward (spiritual) progress is taking place. By coming to know their degenerate ways you shall be seized by the spirit of indifference. (Thus) shall you be inclined towards them who are righteous, and as a consequence (of this inclination) shall faith arise in you. Men of low intelligence will (definitely) abuse you as and when you may attempt to impart them that which is good. Thus shall your intellect attain the state of evenness (on account of abuse from the people of low intelligence). (As a consequence of your balanced intellect) you shall be able to grasp the true character of the world. (Thus will you say unto yourself): "Look, how sorrowful, full of desires, bereft of peace, are people of the world!" Restless are (the worldly people) even after having children, grandchildren, wealth, etc. Upon having understood the true nature of the world, make a disciplined programme of your life, and move, accordingly, towards the true path of transcendence. The final and ultimate truth of life is death, and none (so far) has been able to escape it. Make your thoughts firm and resolute, as the power of discrimination lies in them. Definitely will you reach the goal of your existence provided you renounce selfishness and take your duties seriously. As Punchoo Shaib has said:

That which has happened has happened,
so unnecessarily do people weep.

Be kind to your self, that is, deceive yourself no more.

Qs. How much is one harmed (spiritually) by eating flesh?

Ans. They who eat meat lose the lusture and brilliance of intellect. Upon the destruction of intellect's glow come into being the dispositions of greed, anger, pride and cruelty.

Qs. The scientists, upon discovering the secrets of Nature, not only serve the people, but have changed the shape of the world. But why is that the saints, on the contrary, make scarcely use of their spiritual gifts for the good of humanity? Does it mean that God will be harmed if people are helped spiritually? Or is it because that God does not want to lose the

possession of his spiritual treasures?

Ans. Christ and Mansur had to suffer death on account of their miracles. Shamas Tabriz was skinned alive. Many other saints too have suffered (identically). A man of wisdom allows not his treasure to be wasted purposelessly. (It is not in the performance of miracles) where the real ornaments or beauty of life is to be found. Rather (beauty) of life is reflected (in and through) selfless deeds. Reached is the goal of life through (selfless deeds) alone. If the elements (which compose the world) will not undergo change, the world will present a picture of devastation. Is it possible, then, for a man to reach his destination without self-exertion? No! (That self-exertion bears fruit which is motiveless). Look at the natural sources of energy. All of them - the sun, the moon, air, earth, water, etc. - present an ideal picture of selflessness. Uninterruptedly do they (the natural forces) serve (mankind). (Present the picture) of selfless offering all the forces of Nature.

Wasted, indeed, is the time who talk of spirituality without cultivating simplicity, right conduct, right thoughts, right food, etc. Cheats are they who talk about gnosis (while suffering from moral lacks). One is what one utters, does or lives. Born is every individual in the darkness of ignorance -- in it he lives, grows and dies. It is an exceptional individual alone who has the ability of breaking the vicious circle of ignorance.

With new (scientific) discoveries shall appear new forms of wonder. Amazed shall people be with such wonders. Continues the further explorations of nature with ever new discoveries. While the explorations (of Nature) continues, the explorer ceases to be upon death. Exploration of Nature shall continue to be unless the Unchanging state is not known. Not to attain the state of sameness is much more easy for worldly people. (The worldly people) remain always trapped in the trap of illusions. Thus are deprived (the worldly people) from the knowledge of their own essential nature. (The man of the world) thinks that his nature is identical with that which is phenomenal. Ignorance and illusion will continue to be so far as the desire-oriented juice of

name-and-form remains rooted in consciousness. Arise various types of thoughts in a mind whose imagination is given to naming the objects. (In such a state of mind) doubt arises in both conditions of attainment and non-attainment (of worldly objects). Thus suffers the mind from the lack of constancy. As such the individual undergoes the pain of delusion in a series of countless births and deaths. (It means that) the sense-fluids cause affliction on account of transitoriness of both joy and sorrow. Thus is discovered that the journey of life (in the world) has been an utter waste. Even upon the degeneration of the body the desire for sensual pleasures continues to be (among people caught in delusion). (The result is that) the unfulfilled desires cause the endless of births and deaths. It matters little as to whether one is a scientist, or a householder, or mendicant (in so far as supreme knowledge is concerned). An endless series of births and deaths shall continue to be unless the knowledge of supreme Reality is not gained. For this reason the men of wisdom seek no more the knowledge of Nature. By exploring the (mystery) of life, they arrive at such a spiritual state where no need for any other knowledge is felt.

This creation (of ours) has had many originations and dissolutions. Ask the scientists of the West, who have been engaged in the exploration of Nature, what ultimately have they achieved? Much more progress in (human knowledge) shall be made if they (i.e., the scientist of the West) spent as much time in the exploration of interior world as much is spent in the exploration of Nature. The people of the West have taken hold of those aspects of life which our sages have renounced. Peace will prevail (in the world) only when, after exploring Nature, the Self, too, is explored. What the (western people) at present are engaged in is in the manufacture of consumer goods, and so accordingly are responsible in spreading restlessness in society. The mountains (referring to the glitter of worldly things) look very beautiful at a distance, (but only the mountain-people know the difficulties they have to encounter by living on mountains). They (i.e., the western people) know it very well the kind of inward restlessness that has overtaken them. Find they themselves in the blind alleys of life. Opened have their eyes been by

listening to the (spiritual) discourse of Vivekananda, Ramatirtha, etc. As they are sharp of intellect, they know how to manufacture consumer goods for man's comfort. They also understand it well as to how to live in the world, or how to serve and participate in the suffering of others. Even though they may cheat, they, however, engage in this activity only when time is opportune. In so far as their own countrymen are concerned, they (i.e., the scientists and leaders of the West) are much concerned about the good of their people (than are our's).

Comes to an end the battle of I and you in them who have gained (enough) discriminative wisdom. Attached is one to the family, village, town, province or country to the extent the bondage of illusion (i.e., of ignorance) continues to be. (Instead of attachment), the men of wisdom serve, in equal measure, all living beings of the world. Centuries, indeed, lapse when a man of vision is born. Thus thousands of people are inspired by the lives of such (i.e., wise) men. India, in this respect, has been blessed, from time to time, by men of vision. It is not the concern of the sun to find out as to whether one is benefited or not by its light. The sun, (being detached), continues to illumine everything (with its light). Known is the worth of (sun's) light only when it disappears or when one stumbles in darkness. You shall, dearly beloved, attain the supreme power (of joy) only when you turn inward. Sufficient (spiritual) experience shall be gathered by you only when you spent on others what you have earned. (At appropriate time shall the inward power manifest itself), as it did in the case of Nanak, Mira, Dadu, Paltu, etc. At appropriate time is also (divine power of grace) received. Upon its reception, it changes or transforms everything radically

Qs. We have heard, sir, that fulfilled are the desires of them who visit saints. Is it proper for people to visit saints with motives that are selfish? Are saints mere magicians? If so, there is then nothing left for the Creator to do? May you kindly tell us what is the truth.

Ans. Why are (you trying) to find fault with saints? (Remember it) that whenever you visit a saint, be pure of heart and without a

motive. Even if you visit a saint with some kind of motive, it should be of pure nature. Only with such a kind of hope must a saint be approached. (As a consequence of this) there shall arise subtle (or pure) intelligence which enables one to overcome all the worldly hurdles. Fulfilled are the intentions of people who approach saints with such a mind. (Therefore) necessary it is that one should cause the arising of subtle intelligence). Understand it well that a saint is neither a magician nor does he interfere with the laws which the Lord has established for the functioning of Nature. A saint must be seen as the supreme expression of Wisdom. (As a point illustrations) a saint may be compared to river Ganga. (We know) that the river Ganga flows on with a lot of water. (While flowing), She loses nothing when people fill their pitchers with water from it. As Ganga flows ecstatically and meanders She does not call people for water. Rather it is people themselves who go to her, and fill their pitchers with water in accordance with their needs. (Thus) are people able to quench their thirst. In similar manner must people visit saints for the satisfaction (of their spiritual thirst). Blessed shall be the man with supreme knowledge to the extent he opens up his heart to the saint. (As far as the saints themselves are concerned), they are in no manner involved (personally) in this transaction (as to whether people should visit them or not). That person shall receive no blessings from a saint whose heart is closed. What is needed, when approaching a saint, is a heart that is humble and full of faith. Take that much spiritual food from (the saint) which is enough for your (spiritual) upliftment. Definitely shall you be, then, blessed.

Qs. Is it right to sit in a meditative posture in front of a saint?

Ans. A vessel that if full, makes no noise, whereas a vessel that is half-empty, makes much noise (is an old proverb). Exhibitionists, indeed, are they who sit (near a saint) in a meditative posture. (This posturing) is meant to impress others by projecting themselves as men of renunciation and contemplation. (Instead of false posturing) beneficial it is to participate in the fellowship of righteous with a mind that is creatively awake. With open eyes must one listen to what is being proclaimed (in the congregation).

Never should a word deliberately be uttered which lacks depth, or which is meant only for a show. Truly become obstinate the exhibitionists of their exhibitionism. Remain restless the obstinate unless they utter not words of concoction. (So outward forms of spiritual praxis must be given up). Instead must spiritual practice be practised in the solitude of privacy. So hidden must be one's spiritual praxis that none should know it easily.

Qs. Is it possible, (as some maintain), to attain to the state of spiritual absorption by drinking liquor?

Ans. The contemplative state of absorption comes to be when consciousness is free from mental concomitants and when there is total destruction of thoughts. With liquor it is (the state of swoon) that is gained and not that of contemplative absorption.

Qs. How can we, as seekers, establish ourselves in the path off liberation?

Ans. Cultivate the following two cardinal virtues: faith in saints and self-trust. Apart (from these virtues) there is nothing much that a seeker (needs to follow). Shunned should be that which is unwholesome.

Qs. What, sir, is the meaning (of the statement) that dreadful it is to see dead in a dream"? Is it good to have such dreams?

Ans. Dreams are nothing but the projection of mind. The body of the dead, upon its destruction, remains no more, and no one knows as to what kind of body the self has got, after death, in accordance with its dispositions. Therefore, the thing that is dreamt is nothing but the projection of mind. Maintain right kind of reflection. May Lord bless you with a right kind of intellect.

Qs. Which of the two (forms of life) are better - that of a householder or that of a mendicant?

Ans. As both forms of life are sorrowful, it is in loving the Lord which (alone) bestows true joy.

Qs. You always, sir, insist on truthfulness.. We men of low intelligence, however, are so engrossed with the world that lying at times is seen as a necessity. Oftentimes, on account of laws, we have to lie before government officials by giving them wrong figures concerning our stock of consumer goods. Thus we have to act before the government as well as the consumer in a manner that is contrary to moral law. Suffer we from the fear of imprisonment if truth is spoken. Is it right, even upon knowing that lying is sinful, to speak untruth? How can we carry our activities in the world without lying?

Ans. The words (of your question) lack moral depth. Make it a regular habit of sitting in solitude upon the end of day's work. Think it over as to why a particular person was given 39 kilos when he had to be given forty. Why has this (mishap) happened? The intellect of your's will find the path towards truth by itself if repeatedly this exercise is repeated. Subservient to the dictates of the mind shall you remain to the extent you reflect not in the above manner. (As a consequence of non-reflection) you shall remain uniformed inwardly.

Qs. By cultivating excessively the association of the unrighteous or engaging in wild activities numerous (moral) defects come to the fore. Instead of honouring men of holiness, people like me find fault with them. Even though many sects may respect their respective scripture, yet no mention is made when the question of honouring the saints arises. What, in this context, should (the term) samatavada denote?

Ans. Upon the cultivation of the virtue of respecting others the disposition of love, trust and faith are heightened. Greet, ye seekers, each other with the salutation: *brahman* alone is true. Even though prohibited, none must to prostrate before a (religious) scripture, yet honoured it be by keeping it at a place which is little higher than where people sit. (As a mark of respect) the scripture must be placed upon a spotless and clean sheet of cloth.

The place where the scripture is kept, must not be excessively decorated. The scripture-reciter must never suffer from the sense of self-importance. The seat of the scripture-reciter must be made either of Kusha-grass or from cloth which is woollen. Purified is the psychic apparatus when simplicity and naturalness are (persistently) practised. Arise jealousy, envy and pride in them (whose mental faculties are impure). With a humble heart must every act of charity be brought to completion. Blossoms the virtue of righteousness in the person who considers himself as the lowest of the low. It is natural for the believers in samatavada to think of their body as an instrument of service. (As a consequence of such a disposition) the sense of difference in terms of high and low ceases to be. Thus must one discriminate between a true saint and a non-saint. Suffers he from no (moral or spiritual) lack who shows respect to others.

Qs. What is (the nature of) kecchhari-mudra?

Ans. It is a yogic techniques belonging to Hathayoga school. The technique was particularly made use of by Goraksa, Matseyendra, etc.

Qs. It seems that children neither suffer from elation nor from sorrow, as they remain free from the cares of the world.

Ans. What you say is not true. The children, too, are afflicted by the ills of attachment and envy. They, in addition (to attachment and envy), suffer from ignorance. On account of ignorance they undergo much suffering.

**Qs. Elsewhere you have, sir, said in the Vani:
Fatigue sets in by repeating four and eighteen.
(Instead) remember! (continuously): "Not this, not this!"
May the meaning of it be clarified!**

Ans. It (i.e., not this, not this) is the treasure of saints. Grasp the wise ones, through mere signs, that which has to be grasped. What in the Vani has been said concerns the four Vedas, eighteen Puranas, and nine Smritis.

Qs. Is (the proposition) acceptable which (asserts) that people (generally) deceive themselves?

Ans. (As an illustration): You wear a silken shirt because it pleases your mind. If you take it out now, and do not have it tomorrow, you shall experience pain. (Thus rightly has it been said) that self-deception means to remain self-forgetful by not seeing reality (what it is).

Qs. What is an appropriate way of approaching a Guru?

Ans. (Approached should be the Guru) in the same manner as a woman approaches her lover. (A woman set out to meet her lover), and on the way she encountered a snake. (On the seeing the woman), the snake raised its head. Thus spoke the woman: "Manjula (i.e., her lover) is my temple, and I am going to meet him. Your poisonous bite shall not be able to destroy me." (In a similar manner) must one approach a Guru.

Once a great and holy saint lived in Chowha Bahagtaon (now in Pakistan); his name was Suraj. Regularly was he visited by a Gujjar. Once it so happened that the saint needed some milk. (When the Gujjar came to the hut of the saint), he was told of the need of the saint for some milk. The tribesman, on hearing the need of the saint, said that whatever milk he had, he has sold it all. Upon hearing what the tribesman said, the saint ordered the Gujjar to enter into the hut and bring out a pot of milk from inside. The Gujjar, upon entering the hut (of the saint), found (to his surprise) that all the pots were full of milk. (While coming out from the hut), the Gujjar prostrated at the feet of the saint and pleaded that he too be shown the path of the Lord. So firm was Gujjar's faith in the saint that he used to say: "By name I am Shahani, by caste, ahir. (Blessed am I) that I have a true saint in Suraj. Wheteher Allah is affirmed or denied, I, however, remain true unto Suraj."

Qs. Usually two types of people are found in the world, namely, intellectual and emotional. What it means is that people are either clever of intellect or emotional of heart. What path, sir,

among the two (i.e., intellectual or emotional) is the best?

Ans. Dangerous are the people who are clever of intellect. Cleverly make they use of every trick in the trade. The emotional ones, on the other hand, can reform themselves (inwardly) if given a chance. Even (men of emotion), on account of ignorance, make use of (clever) tricks. Thus suffer both types of men from satanic dispositions. (Truly is he brilliant) intellectually whose sense-organs are controlled and whose intellect takes no orders from the mind. Matters it little as to whether one is clever of intellect or emotional in heart, as both the dispositions are of unrighteous nature.

Qs. Is it true to say that there are many people who have renounced their body?

Ans. Renounce the corruptible! Be inclined towards the righteous! Realised is the renunciation of the body when the intellect's impure tendencies are replaced by the pure ones. Consider such dispositions of destructive nature which attempt at transforming the body into a youthful state or which engage in impure deeds. Thus such dispositions or acts cannot be termed as endeavours for renunciation of the body.

Qs. What is the way of removing doubts from the mind?

Ans. Disappear (all forms of) doubt (from the mind) when the words of the Guru are (listened with) trust and when the consequences of Divine Will are known. Depend no more on the clever schemes of your intellect; rather put your entire trust in the words of your Guru. Thus shall all your doubts be extinct. Blessed shall you be with the transcendent illumination upon the attainment of (firm) faith. Even if no (transcendent) experience is experienced, loose no courage. Rather bring to perfection your faith in your Guru. It is through faith alone that the (ultimate) goal (of life) is reached.

Qs. What is the nature of the three states of consciousness through which an individual passes?

Ans. All the three aspects (of the deed) - namely, the doer, the deed, and the fruit of the deed - are known by the intellect in its wakeful state. While in dream, the intellect knows only the doer and the deed. Terminates the state (of consciousness) in the void blank which is devoid of a result, or which allows (various perceptions and thoughts) to arise. In the state of deep sleep consciousness knows only the doer. Absent are (in the state) both the deed and its fruit. It is a state in which the consciousness of I am alone remains. Right shall (everything) be with you if you are of right (disposition). Definite is your spiritual fall the moment you consider yourself as different from, and higher to, others. Suffers that individual not from a spiritual fall who, with a determined will, allows not, even at the cost of life, the calm of the mind to be disturbed. Such an individual, thus, is always engaged in the worship of the Lord. (An ungodly) person is always in danger of being bitten by the snake-like ego. Thus (an egoist) always thinks of himself as superior (in every way) to others. A non-egoist, on the other hand, shall be free from the oppression of egoism. Rather he, with an attitude of self-surrender, remembers the Lord with (such) prayerful words: "Snatch not, O Lord, peace of my mind even if my body is torn to pieces!"

Qs. Is it possible for (people) like us to say: I am the Truth?

Ans. Yes, you can utter such-like words only if you have become (spiritually) a fit vessel.

Qs. What, sir, actually happens on becoming (spiritually) a perfect vessel?

Ans. Nothing special happens! Thinks of himself as God. Sinful it is to think of oneself "I am the Truth" to the extent both the bodily pain and pleasure are experienced! It is much worse than that!

Qs. What does the Lord of three worlds (trilokinath) mean?

Ans. The Self is referred to as (trilokinath) on account of its being the Lord of the gross body, mind and intellect.

Qs. How can cow slaughter be stopped?

Ans. Listen carefully to what is being uttered. You wear particular type of sandals when you, in the morning, go to the forest. In likemanner you wear different type of shoes when you, after coming to home from office, intend to go for an evening walk. Even the strap of your watch is made of leather. Also you do not like the hat which has no leather strap. The belt you like for your trousers should be that of leather. The hand-bag you want on your travels, too, must be of leather. From the toe of your foot to the crown of your head you want everything of leather. These are your personal preferences and requirements. There are millions of Indians like you who want leather goods. From where will the Government of India procure so much leather to fulfill the needs of the people? If the demand for leather goods goes up and up, how can, then, the slaughter of cows be stopped? Rather the (slaughter of cows) will increase. If you consider that cow is the mother of all, and the slaughter (of cows) must come to an end, then what is needed is that the demand (for leather goods) must decrease. Less and less cows will be slaughtered with the decrease in the demand for leather goods. When the demand for leather goods shall cease to be, the slaughter of cows by itself will come to an end.

Qs. How do you, sir, view caste system?

Ans. Right and proper is (the caste system) from the worldly standpoint. The wheels of society shall run smoothly to the extent that each segment of social hierarchy performs its deeds in accordance with its duty. Deception and darkness shall be the order of the day if caste system is seen as a mere label.

Qs. Advocates the Advaita Vedanta the unity of the individual self and of the Supreme Self. Shall there be not social break down and moral corruption if the affairs of the world are carried out in accordance with this principle (of identity)?

Ans. Know this well! Pervasion of moral corruption (in society) comes to be when people not only misinterpret, but misuse (for

their own personal ends), the Advaitic principle of identity. The Advaitic thought is a matter for deep reflection. As one of the paths of (transcendence), the Advaitic principle of identity enables one to transcend his creaturely (contingency) by merging in pure Consciousness, namely, the Self. Just as the character of the objective world is that of duality, so whatever is perceived or experienced at the phenomenal level, shall be characterised by duality. Both the social break down and moral corruption will take place if the world is viewed in the context of the principle of identity. Thus rightly have sages said that one should be a non-dualist in relation to one's will. Inward reflection (of non-dualism) must always concern itself with the Self, whereas the disposition of duality must deal with the commerce of the world.

Qs. What, sir, is dissolution?

Ans. Dissolution is that (mental) state which is not impinged upon by thought-waves.

Qs. How should the doctrines of communism be treated and viewed?

Ans. Truly will communism represent the Divine Spirit provided it incarnates within itself (moral) values. Bereft of spiritual values, it may be said to represent Satan. Makes the intellect manifest the true spirit of egalitarianism when it, in equal measure and proportion, takes care of each organ of the body. Although there are very many organs in the body, yet each organ functions, (without hindering the working of other organs), in accordance with its own specific nature. Thus the hand does the deed which is specific to it, and so does the eye, the nose, the ear, etc. The intellect (does not differentiate one organ from the other); rather all of them are treated alike. If, for example, there is trouble in the eye, the intellect immediately turns its attention towards it till it is healed. The witnessing intellect, by treating all organs (of the body) equally, (reflects the true spirit of equality).

This machine, called the body, is run collectively by all the organs. The feet, for example, do the work of walking, whereas

the mind thinks. (In no way should mind think it is superior to feet). The (responsibility) of the intellect is never to allow the mind to entertain such thoughts. It is the (job of) the intellect to treat both the mind and the feet equally, as the function of each one is as important as that of the other. Similarly must the world be viewed. The nature of the world is like that of the body. Likewise each person in the world has its own peculiar significance. It is the duty of the king to provide each person (in his kingdom) the wherewithal according to their respective ability and capacity. Thus the administration (of the kingdom) will be run smoothly. No person is either high or low on account of his job or function. Thus must the spirit of equality be maintained at all times. (What it means) is that each person's needs, in accordance with his ability, must be fulfilled. (It is this spirit of equality) which is (the foundation) as well as the structure of socialism. A socialism that believes in (the creed) of greed will not last for long. It will, with the passages of time, meet its own death. The real (form of) socialism is that which is duty-bound, as it reflects the essential nature (of life).

Qs. Customary tradition has it been among the people to treat ochre-robed mendicants with respect. Why is it that the disposition towards such a person arises by itself? As the entire community of monks wear ochre-coloured robes, why did our forefathers give such an importance to this robe?

Ans. The ochre colour (of the monk's habit) denotes the colour of the flames of burning fire. The ochre-coloured habit to our forefathers signified that wearer of this habit is a person who has gained (the state) of supreme illumination by burning, in the flames of fire, all his carnal and mental attachments. Just as everything is reduced to ashes in fire, so the wearer of the ochre-coloured habit, by burning his attachments in the fire of detachment, shines forth (with the wisdom) of redemptory gnosis. Natural to man are four kinds of attachments, namely, of the body, of the family, of the society (to which he belongs), and of the country. He alone is the right claimant of ochre habit who has transcended these four forms of attachment. Rest is all show - and you are well acquainted about the character of the wearers

of ochre-habit these days. They are as far away from Reality (as are common masses). The respect and faith that (people) have towards ochre robe has its source in the renunciation (of the wearer of the robe).

Qs. Not much emphasis has been laid on celibacy in the (spiritual) doctrine of homogeneity (samata) which you have, sir, expanded in the Samata Vilas and Samamta Prakasa. Why is it so, sir?

Ans. The five basic (spiritual) principles of *samata* – simplicity, service, truthfulness, right fellowship, and right recollection -- have been given (much emphasis) for the simple reason that the instinctual desires, which exert tremendous influence upon the intellect, may be curbed. No control over the instinctual drives is possible merely by asserting that the discipline of self-control is needed. (Thus the above principles) are formulated realistically, so that, by adhering to them, celibacy may be maintained. The disease (of the instinctual desires) will disappear if the discipline (as codified in the above principles) is followed (regularly).

Qs. How is it possible for a householder to maintain his celibacy when his wife would like to satisfy the desires of her flesh?

Ans. Try to understand carefully (what is going to be said). Weak of heart, indeed, are women than are men. A man, who is of firm opinion and of right conduct, can (easily) mould his wife to his own way of life. Through discriminative knowledge can he discipline the wife.

Qs. (Your method), sir, may not be applicable to women of modern day, as their nature and milieu is quite antithetical (to what you have said). What should be done in contexts where women are much more powerful than men?

Ans. Listen attentively. Since there is so any other treatment or method available, So cut asunder, like Ramatirtha, all familial ties.

Qs. The present political administration in the country seems to be in a state of diffusion. Even though the country has won its freedom recently, the administrators, instead of serving the country, are engaged in corrupt practices. Can you throw some light on the causes which have given rise to the present state of affairs?

Ans. Further will the administrative set-up of India erode in the time to come. Right is the administration of those (administrators) who have transcended the dialectic of greed and self-aggrandizement. Run by them is government properly who are wise and (deeply) spiritual. As the morally degenerate men are in ascendance these day, it, thus, is not their concern to think good of the public. It is men of greed who dominate the affairs (of the world). Such a (degenerate) state of affairs cannot, however, be sustained for long. Proper is the method and proper the conclusion if the executor is both spiritual and learned. Submerged will be everything (in the waters of moral decay) like (the house) whose foundation is wrong? – think and ponder over it.

Qs. Fortunate are we definitely that, after a long period of enslavement, the country has won its freedom. Doubly are we blessed that government of the country is in the hands (of those men and women) who have given great sacrifices for the freedom of the country. May you, sir, tell us something as to what is going to be the shape and form of country's government in the future?

Ans. True it is that the patriots, through great personal sacrifice, have obtained freedom for the country. (Know this) that antithetical to each other are the dispositions of serving and ruling the country.. Both these dispositions, being of opposite nature, can never come together. Absent is the desire to rule (over other) in the one who is of serving nature. Even if such a person becomes a ruler, he will be unable to rule.

For a good governance four essential principles need to be followed. First, women must be given total freedom in relation to family and society. Besides these freedoms, harmful shall it

prove if (women) are given some other freedoms, In particular will such freedoms be harmful for children, as women will be unable to give birth to such an offspring which will be righteous of conduct and firm of will. Corrupt, degenerate and unrighteous shall be the offspring of such women. (As a consequence of such pregnancy) the basic administrative structure of the country will be destroyed. How can the government of the country be righteous when its future progeny will be of low quality? Functions properly the society when its members are of one accord. Deprived will be of the spirit of unity the progeny which is corrupt and unrighteous.

The second principle, which is essential for good governance, is that the laws of taxation must be just and right. Commodities must be taxed in such a manner that they become not expensive (or beyond the reach of common man). At reasonable price must the essential commodities be made available to the public. The third principle (for good governance) concerns itself with the distribution of wealth (among the citizens): that there are neither rich nor poor. The distribution of wealth must be based on the principle of equality. The fourth principle is directly related to public administration. (A good administration is that) whose administrators are learned, noble and humble. In their dealings with the public the spirit of impartiality must be the norm. (If the four principles are followed correctly, the country will be blessed with a good government).

These days nobody listens to what the saints have to say. The government of the country at present (knows only) how to impinge (upon the rights of the citizens). Thus must you yourself ponder (in the light of what has been told) as to what is going to happen (to the country) in future.

Qs. What (kind of) precautionary (steps) must a social reformer undertake concerning the betterment of society?

Ans. Before reforming a (particular) tradition, custom or law, necessary it is (that the custom, tradition or law that is to be reformed) be analysed properly. It means, in other words, that, before

refuting a tradition, custom or law, the basis or foundation (of a tradition, custom or law) be located. (Once the foundation is located), it becomes much easier to tell who the originator of the tradition, (custom or law) is, and what exactly is its meaning. (The reformer may) inform the public the knowledge he has gathered (concerning the tradition, custom or law that needs to be reformed). The public will prove to be helpful to the reformer only when it has understood (the total meaning of the tradition, custom or law).

Qs. Is it morally right to renounce the place which has provided all the necessary comforts? If a person, on account of age or health, is unable to participate in the defence of a city or town, can it be said to be a form of service if such a person consoles the people (during the moments of crises)?

Ans. Duty-bound is every (able-bodied) person to participate in the defence of the city (as and when it is in danger). Morally is bound every person to serve his neighbour, no matter who the neighbour may be. Life shall definitely be easeful (if the spirit of service is cultivated). It is not, however, a moral defect if one has to leave the place of (residence) due to circumstance beyond one's control.

Qs. Even though we hear daily discourses on (such moral virtues) as, for example, simplicity, service, truthfulness, righteous fellowship, and right recollection (of the Name), why is it, sir, that mind remains unaffected? And why does (the mind) forget (these principles) at the time of meditation?

Ans. The door of (spirit) shall be opened to him who, with right disposition, endeavours to renounce the sinful (ways of life). What shall (such a person) find who merely listens (to discourses) but practices not (what he listens)? Faith arises in him who (cultivates) the fellowship of holy persons. That (spiritual) seeker remains engaged in righteous deeds who differentiates the wholesome deeds from the unwholesome ones, whose disposition is oriented towards service, who, with true faith, surrenders at the feet of the Lord, who constantly thinks good of the others, and

who even at the time of death, remember the Lord. Remain men of the world, however, immersed in their own forgetfulness.

Pray constantly unto the Lord! May you be blessed with a right (kind of) mind! Ponder, with a (right) mind, over the glory of God. Thus will you be (able) to lead (a right kind) of life. May you derive maximum (spiritual) benefit for being born in this world! The arising of right tendencies will come to be if instructed by a perfect teacher.

Qs. How blessed and fortunate am I that I have come in contact with a (perfect) teacher like you! May your prayerful grace enable me to attain the state of spiritual illumination!

Ans. Disclose not (the spiritual truths) to others which have been revealed unto you. (With this secret knowledge) have saints attained the supreme state of Being. You shall, with the help of this secret knowledge, by itself attain the highest state of Being. Believe not in empty prayers! Rather be practical in your practice.

Qs. What kind of future is in store for me? Is it true that the catastrophic events are avoided through the prayers of faqirs?

Ans. Determined will your future be by the kind of life you lead. This never interferes with the laws of Nature. This desires good of others. Be courageous and fearless. There is nothing to be afraid of. Concern yourself with your inwardness. Just as the phenomenal life is transient, so accordingly is worldly life full of sorrows. Believe resolutely in what has been revealed to you. Under no circumstances must you accept defeat. Try, therefore, to reform your life (for the better).

Qs. How is grace obtained from saints?

Ans. Reflected is the grace of saints in the nature of your faith.

Qs. How must time be managed for spiritual praxis?

Ans. Always must man remain punctual concerning the use of time. Conducts properly the activities in the world the person who respects time. You shall know how great men of the world were punctual of time only by studying their lives. The (secret) of their success (is to be found in their management of time). Remains incomplete the task of the man who respects not time. Remains in the state of disturbance the man who misuses time. Never can such a person bring anything to fruition with ease. Thus it is essential (for everyone) to be punctual of time.

Qs. What are the reasons that you seem to have neither liking for flowers nor do you allow (your disciples) to bring flowers for you?

Ans. What you say is not true. Flowers should be (seen) as a wonderful gift of Nature. As the life of flowers is transient, they die as soon as they fade. It is a misconception to say that *This* has no liking for flowers. What *This* dislikes (most) is the destruction of short-lived flowers. (As you know), *This* often lives, when outside the city-borders, in small gardens (where flowers are in abundance). Often has *This* noticed that people, even before going to temple in the morning, cause destruction of flowers by plucking them for worship. There is no reason that flowers should be destroyed for worshiping imaginary divinities. It is what *This* does not like. Kabir has rightly said:

Brahma is the root, Vishnu the branch, and Shiva the flower,
By breaking the three (divinities), whom do you worship?

Qs. Is it not a strange command to ask the disciples to cover the heads as and when the Vani is recited? Does the covering of heads denote any kind of spiritual praxis? Is it not true that this tradition (of covering of heads) is not common throughout the country? Are such people deprived of spiritual experience (who cover not their heads)?

Ans. The physical frame of *This* was born in Punjab. The covering of head, in the cultural context of Punjab, is considered as a sign of respect. Thus whenever someone, with a covered head, takes a

seat in the congregation, he thereby shows respect to it. It is for this reason that *This* asks that the heads be covered (as and when attending a congregation). No spiritual significance, however, may be attached to the covering of heads. There are many places in the country where this cultural trait of covering of heads is considered as an inauspicious omen. (To cover or not to cover the head) is simply a cultural expression, and so has nothing to do with spirituality.

Qs. What were the intentions (or main reasons) for establishing (the convention) of Annual Congregation?

Ans. In no manner must the annual gathering of devotees be seen as a kind of spiritual arrangement for the seeker. The (convention) of yearly gathering (of devotees) has been established with the intention that the reflective process (of the seekers) may be deepened. With such an intention is this (convention) of fellowship established: that the seeker may learn how to serve selflessly, that he may realise that togetherness is the essence of *smamta* when lived and shared collectively. Learnt also is that it is through love that social bonds of unity are strengthened. In the time to come the world will be seized by the spirit of atheism. The theists will be theists only in name. Few will there be who will be in the possession of truth. Thus will be given rise to degenerate ways of life. As a consequence (of such living) destructive forces will reign supreme (over the lives of people). Thus shall people destroy themselves with bombs, murder and slaughter.

(As the context of contemporary life is very dark), the need for annual gathering is to bring to light, in the midst of darkness, the salvific techniques of our ancient sages. (It is in the milieu of such a gathering) where the arising of divine qualities is possible among them whose moral dispositions are wholesome. Born are, from time to time, men of divine quality for the restoration of law of righteousness by causing the destruction of that which is evil. (Possible it is) that a time may come when a man of righteousness will again, through righteous fellowship, restore spiritual awareness among the people.

Qs. How and in what way can the teachings of samata reach people? Would not it be far better if the illuminating knowledge of samata has a broader expansion?

Ans. Never try to manipulate the minds of people with the intention of making them the members of Samatavada. Make no attempt at changing the character of the Fellowship by making it into a kind of sect. Rather turn your efforts towards your own self. Two or three preachers of deep spirituality shall definitely be able at illuminating the world with the knowledge of *samata*. As the essence of *samata*-knowledge is perfect and complete, it will (each time) spread by itself.

Qs. What are the reasons that the date for every annual gathering has been fixed (once-for-all)? Why should it be held on the first Sunday of Kartik? Are there reasons (spiritual or otherwise) for it? Does this day have a special importance for you or for your mother?

Ans. Do you believe that *This* too is the victim of social customs and traditions? Devotee: No, Lord. Gurudeva: This conducts such gatherings (whether annual or monthly) in every season. Experience has taught that sometimes rains, sometimes cold, and sometimes heat (of the summer) cause various kinds of difficulties. Sometimes people are busy in harvesting their crops. On account of these various factors it was felt that the first Sunday of Kartik is the most appropriate time for such a gathering. Also it is the time when the fields are free from crops and the heat is less. It is a time of the year when there is neither heat nor cold. (As the climate is moderate), so the need for clothes is minimum. Also food, when cooked, does not get easily spoiled. This date for annual gathering was fixed by taking into consideration all these factors. Sometimes it so happens that the festival of Diwali falls on this day. It was thus decided that, in case of such an eventuality, the gathering may be held on the second Sunday of Kartik. The day of Sunday has been fixed as it is the day of holiday. Keeping these various viewpoints in view, this date was thus fixed for the annual gathering.

Conversation with Devotee

(This conversation between Gurudeva and a Devotee was held in the month of December, 1953 at Abohar Mandi, Punjab).

One day Gurudeva was sitting in a deep reflection mood. A newspaper was lying nearby, in which a detailed discussion was printed between a famous spiritual leader and a very rich man. This spiritual leader headed a very important Hindu denomination. In the newspaper it was said: "You say the written words speak, whereas I say it are the eyes which see." When (someone) made a mention of this discourse to Gurudeva, he immediately responded that these words are of Kabir. These (so-called spiritual leaders) want to attain fame through sheer (copying). They get printed (discourses of others) by paying money to newspaper owners. In this way they attempt to influence people, and thereby increase the number of their followers. It suffers (from an identical) self-importance which the kings are accused of. The goal of *This* is to awaken the people from the traps which the Gurudom gives rise to.

On hearing these words of Gurudeva a Devotee asked: "During the time of Sikh Gurus the tradition of inheriting the (spiritual seat) existed. But, sir, you have totally opposed (this tradition) of Gurudom in the *Sri Samata Vilas*."

Ans. The Sikh Gurus had come to fulfill the divine mission, and so remained absorbed in the (loving) ecstasy of God. Their life depended, apart from service, simplicity, truthfulness and spirituality, upon self-sacrifice. The sacrifice of the last Guru, namely, Guru Gobind Singh, is exemplary and second-to-none.

Both the son and the father (offered themselves) as sacrificial victims (for the good of others). They unified a fragmented nation by making it (morally and spiritually) strong. By offering everything, they proved:

They who love thee
Are ever ready to offer even their head.

(It is a spirituality) in which everything is offered (unto God), and nothing is asked (for oneself). But the followers (of the Gurus) believe no more in giving; rather they believing in taking. Once the mission (of the last Guru) was completed, he totally abolished the tradition of inheriting the spiritual seat.

Qs. The Sikhs, Maharaj Ji, seem (always) to be proclaiming: "The Khalsa will rule (over the realms of creation)."

Ans. This (proclamation) in itself is right and good. (It) is applicable only when the pure, the best and the renouncers will come to rule. In such a (situation) alone peace will prevail. It is, however, a far cry for such situation to come about. (The situation) now is that of confusion. Each and every person is running here-and-there for getting more (and more), and none is ready to give or share (with others what he has). Love means to share with everyone (what one has). It is not give-and-take. Who will become (these days) a saintly militant. Everyone is addicted to the drinking of liquor and eating of flesh.

Qs. You have, on the hand, denounced Gurudom, but, on the other, you have praised (the status) of a Guru in the *Samata Vilas* in superlative terms. Is not it contradictory to what (you have been saying) against Gurudom?

Ans. If the solution (to spiritual anguish) had been found in the tradition of inheriting the spiritual seat, then Mahant Ratandas, who is to inherit a famous spiritual seat of Kabirpanthis, would not be searching for a Guru in the way he is doing. *This* too had been nominated to a spiritual seat of a Guru. When *This* attained discrimination, the pomp and show of Gurudom proved to be

fake. (Felt *This*) that life was being destroyed. What the *vani* of Kabir was saying, it just was not being reconciled to the (conflict) that was going on within. Nothing tangible except disappointment came to *This* even after roaming from one pilgrim centre to other, from one monastery to another. Ultimately (*This*) was blessed with vision Divine, and so *This* spends time in solitude and away from the din of the world.

Qs. What was the need of writing this new text *Sri Samata Prakash* when we already have so many texts? Your *vani* is not only similar, but identical, with the *vani* of *Guru Granth Sahib*. What was the need of giving rise to another text?

Ans. Whenever righteousness is in decrease and unrighteousness is in ascendance, then a religious text, in accordance with Divine Will, is being composed for the good of those who have strayed away from the path (of righteousness). The good news of every religion depends upon the proclamation of truth, unity and love. As the time passed, the followers of Gurus no more followed the path of renunciation. Instead they simply, like parrots, read their (religious) texts. When such a state of affairs comes to be, (the followers) follow their own goals and programmes. Look at the present state of the Sikhs. Guru Govind Singh Ji, through his Five Beloveds, unified the scattered or fragmented nation. He gave life to that which was dead. Now his follower are preaching that they are different from others. They also hate others by claiming to be pure. They find no fault in scattering the beads of the rosary of their forefathers. The consequence of this will be: they who respect and honour the *vani* of *Guru Granth* will no more do so. The *vani* of the *Samata Prakash* will work against this hate campaign. Thus should the *Samata Ashrams* be established at different places. The light of the *Samata Prakash* must penetrate among the people (who come to these *Ashrams* of *Samata*). The essence of every supernal revelation is identical. (Which is characterised by) love, service and unity. Apart from it, everything is ill and of the nature of perversion. Thus has fallen the great responsibility upon the shoulders of them who are the lovers of *Samata*: to proclaim and spread the illuminating (knowledge) of *Samata vani*. The programme of running *satsang* and of

leading moral life must be undertaken within the means that are available. (This should be done) with the purpose of overcoming the melieu of hate and prejudice. The time of *This* has reached (now) to its end.

Qs. If the Ashrams are established at different places it would mean you will have to initiate someone (for the purpose of taking your place). If this happens, does it not denote Gurudom?

Ans. No question of establishing of Guru arises. Gurus are not made. Gurudom is nothing but (the process of) making Gurus. In so far as salvific knowledge is concerned, there is nothing more to be said. The great *mantra* must be considered as the *mantra* of Guru. Spontaneously has (the essence) of *mantra* been experienced in the condition of *samadhi*. What has been experienced, has been disclosed (unto you). Now the *mantra* has been written, in its complete form, in the *Samata Prakash*. The *Gita* has explained *japa-yoga* as the excellent method of meditation. This *mantra* (of Gurudeva) terminates in all spiritual perfections.

Qs. Elsewhere in the *Samata Vilas* you have said that the real yoga is that which results in the unification of mind and breathing. But now you seem to be saying that the best method of meditation is that of *mahamantra*. Which one is the right one, sir?

Ans. Attain they the state of Guru who trust in what the Guru says. When the physical presence of a self-realised is no more, some clever people, by overlooking the advice of the Guru, give rise to Gurudom. By misleading simple people, these people lead a life of comfort at the cost of others. The significance of this *mahamantra* has already been explained, so that (later on) none may mislead people. Trust alone is (one's) perfect Guru.

Qs. It is possible that someone may mislead people, and thereby instead of preaching the *mahamantra*, may preach the *Guru-mantra*.

Ans. Man, indeed, is weak of mind. Becomes man the victim of weakness due to greed. As mere words cannot remove one's hunger, so no spiritual attainment can come to be without a perfect Guru.

Qs. How can the *mahamantra*, in your absence, bring about inward contentment? The *mahamantra* is not different from the word "bread" that is written (on a piece of paper).

Ans. You, being clever, seem to be pleading the case of the clever ones, who entrap the simple people in the trap of deception. Differentiate not between what is written and spoken by the men of realisation. Key to success is nothing but true trust.

Qs. Can a person of selfless disposition and of true faith initiate people spiritually? Can such a person be made a leader?

Ans. You are fool of a fool! What has (*This*) been telling you. Floods alone destroy the crops of a field. (You) seem to be working against your mission! If ever such a thing happens, resist it, so that others may learn. Men of clever intellect can do this. You, however, must remain ever vigilant.

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